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**CASTLE OF BEESTON.**

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CASILE OF BERTON



Castle of Beeston,

*Benny*<sup>n</sup> OR, *Swinneaton*

RANDOLPH, EARL OF CHESTER.

AN

HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

Fabrics must moulder e'en as Mortals die;  
But Virtuous Deeds defy the Pow'r of Time,  
And shine resplendent in eternal Fame!

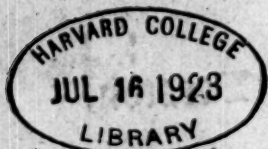
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By John Brewster

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# CASTLE OF BEESTON.

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## Chapter I.

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"Reader," hast thou ever weigh'd a sigh,  
Or studied the philosophy of tears?  
Hast thou descended deep into the breast,  
And seen their source? If not, descend with me  
And trace these briny riv'lets to their springs.

YOUNG.

---

IN the extensive vale of Chester,  
terminated by the romantic hills of  
Gresford, and the opposite ranges  
of Buckley and Peckforton, stands

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B

an

an insulated rock, now known by the name of the Castle of Beeston, in earlier periods eminently conspicuous as the residence of Randolph the Good, Earl of Chester, a title above all praise.

The Earl boasted a daughter beautiful and virtuous, but love bore its influence over her youthful heart; and separation from its object added doubt, fear and uncertainty, to the other harrassing sensations attendant on that passion.

Ere the happy peasant had broke the silence of the morn, or the refulgent sun-beams cheared the tops of the Staffordshire heights, the lovely  
Agatha;

Agatha, on the castle's brow, lamented  
the absence of her adored Rodol-  
phus:---

“O cruel War! restrain thy slaugh-  
“tering hand, nor thus divide the  
“dearest ties of nature; ever as thou  
“goest, the matron's sorrows and the  
“maiden's tears bedew thy footsteps.  
“O gentle Peace! restore Rodolphus  
“to my sorrowing breast---let me once  
“more behold him---pride of the Ces-  
“trian race! lord of my heart! my fa-  
“ther's favourite, and the best of  
“men!---but Agatha, to brave Ro-  
“dolphus lost, now weeps!”

Prophetic words! a sudden chill-  
ness overcame her, when the loud



horn announced a courier near. A dread foreboding of succeeding woe impelled her to seek her apartment, when passing by St. Werburgh's-gate, (so called, the barrier of the lower ward) a sound of footsteps---then the sighs of grief---arrested her attention.

Anxious to learn from whence they sprung, she paused---she listened---and, alas! she heard a doating father moan his daughter's loss!

“Where is my Agatha?-- her gentle frame, I fear, will ne'er sustain  
 “this sad, sad shock. Rodolphus,  
 “noble youth! thou died'st with honour in a glorious cause.”

On the termination of the Earl's affectionate



affectionate exclamation, the gentle Agatha swooned beneath the weight of sudden affliction.

The noble Randolph entered the lofty citadel, accompanied by the Barons of Malpas and Stockport---Sir Hugh de Peckforton, the messenger who brought the melancholy tidings, slowly following.

The person of the Earl was above the common stature, of the exactest symmetry---majestic yet gentle---commanding yet engaging---his face a strong index to his mind, denoting equally, valour, wisdom and goodness.---

He was rich without oppression---  
charitable

charitable without ostentation---courtous without deceit---and brave without cruelty; sincere in his friendship---impressive in his speech, but few of words---when Randolph spoke 'twas to the purpose sure!

Not thus the high, ambitious De Peckforton---tyranny, pride, and jealousy, seemed the prominent traits in his countenance, hid under the specious mask of deep dissembling smiles. Proud of his ancestry and martial prowess---a muscular person, not unfitly formed, the constant pains he took in decorating which, proved him not unacquainted with its perfections.

De

De Peckforton stood in anxious expectation of beholding the sufferings of that maid, who dared to prefer the hand of the Lord Rodolphus, to that of Sir Hugh de Peckforton.

The faithful Beatrice, trembling, left her couch, to break the agonizing tale to her beloved lady. The soldiery dropped a tear to departed worth, and all the inmates of the castle were involved in sorrow---but how quick the transition from grief to consternation, when the affrighted Beatrice discovered by her cries, to the astonished attendants, that Agatha was not in her apartment.

The alarm-bell was rung to close  
the

the gates---the name of Agatha resounded through the vaulted roofs---but no responsive cry relieved their search.

The dawning day rendered visible the sorrowful and agonizing countenances of this interesting group; when, in the midst of the confusion, the Baron of Stockport, opening St. Werburgh's-gate, discovered to the anxious numbers the stricken, inanimate Agatha!

A deadly paleness had superseded the lovely bloom of nature, and those eyes which once spoke the purest sensibility, though open, were now incapable of viewing the objects around her;

her; not even parental soothing could recall her, and she was conveyed to her apartment, where restoratives were administered to her injured spirits.

Sir Hugh de Peckforton was permitted to depart; and the Earl, with his numerous domestics, retired to lament the loss of that youth, whom, in the course of time, they once hoped to greet, as Lord of the Castle of Beeston.



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## Chapter 2.

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Relentless death! that, steel'd to human woe,  
With murd'rous hands, deals havoc on mankind :  
Why (cruel!) strike this deprecated blow,  
And leave "the wretched fair one" thus behind?

SHAW.

---

THE noble Randolph, losing his  
amiable consort in the prime of her  
life; and during his battles for his  
king on the continent, and elsewhere,  
many of his relatives and youthful  
friends,



friends, had long been habituated to part with those he loved with the firmness of a great mind. But here, his beloved Agatha, the comfort and joy of approaching age--the only pledge of mutual love---the darling of his affections, was likely to be torn from him: his grief for Rodolphus was lost in the more powerful calls of nature, for the preservation of his daughter---his philosophy fled at the idea, and with faltering steps, he retired to his closet, to beseech the interference of that BEING, who from long experience, and inward conviction, he had found to be the only source of earthly consolation.

The

The affectionate attentions of the good Beatrice, together with the aid of returning reason, had enabled Agatha, the ensuing morning, to receive the sympathetic condolence of a doating father.

Few restoratives tend more to the healing of a wounded mind, than parental soothing; they, we know, spring from the heart; they are not the common-place unmeaning words of comfort from the world, whose pity becomes insult, and whose visits often proceed from impertinent curiosity.

Piety depicted upon the Earl's features, together with an affectionate smile,

smile, occasioned by Agatha's amendment, rendered him an object truly interesting.

He seated himself beside her on the couch---gently took her hand between his---raised it to his lips with a degree of religious extacy, and bedewed it with tears of pain and pleasure.

Agatha heaved a heart-rending sigh, and sunk upon Earl Randolph's bosom---he kissed away the tear that glistened on her cheek: when, after a momentary pause, with a timid, supplicating countenance, she requested the melancholy narration.

The Earl endeavoured to persuade  
her

her to postpone the recital, fearful of renewing those afflictions, which recently portended consequences so fatal: but she was resolute in her request, and at length, yielding to her strong entreaties, he suppressed only the description of the bloody action in which he fell; concluding with an encomium on Sir Hugh de Peckforton, for gaining permission from the Prince to return, to lighten the afflictions of the house of Randolph.

This panegyric was totally opposite to the opinion Agatha had conceived of De Peckforton, attributing these attentions to his ambitious views, in the renewal of his former offers; a  
source

source equally of fear and abhorrence in the breast of Agatha, from a knowledge of his vindictive spirit in one instance, and her unshaken attachment to the memory of Rodolphus in the other.

Agatha was astonished at the Earl's misconception of De Peckforton's motive, but her respect for filial obedience deterred her from attributing an error to that mind, to which she had invariably looked up, as her rule of conduct.

The Earl perceived by her countenance, her disapprobation of the conclusion of his narrative; when, after a pause of some moments, he retired



retired for the night, bestowing a pious blessing on his daughter.

Several weeks passed on, in the course of which, a settled melancholy seemed to have taken possession of that form, once the admiration of the circle of her friends, for the amiable vivacity with which it was endowed.

This misfortune was much lamented by Randolph, as depriving him of the chief enjoyment of his life, ---the society of his daughter: His anxiety for her recovery induced him to use the most earnest entreaties to her, again to associate with his court, as a means of dispelling the gloom which now overcame her.

After



After much persuasion she assented, sacrificing to paternal affection, her inclination for solitude and a sequestered life.

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Chapter 3.

---

At length escap'd from ev'ry human eye,  
From ev'ry duty, ev'ry care,  
That in my mournful thoughts might claim a  
share,  
Or force my tears their flowing streams to dry;  
Beneath the gloom of this embowering shade,  
This lone retreat for tender sorrow made,  
I now may give my burden'd heart relief,  
And pour forth all my stores of grief.

LYTTLETON.

---

THE mind oppressed by misfortunes  
becomes languid and absorbed, until  
some striking event rouses it to exer-  
tion.

tion. Love, happiness and content beamed over Agatha's youth; each wish of her heart either paternal affection, or the solicitude of love anticipated.

Rodolphus, called by the voice of honour to foreign wars, ever destructive to British welfare, was the first grief Agatha experienced; the sweet intercourse of reciprocal love is more powerfully felt than described, and an eternal deprivation of its object too often proves fatal.

The evening preceding this irksome day, Agatha expressed a wish to Beatrice, of walking in the extensive wood beneath the precipice. The

setting sun hastened her departure, and with mournful steps, she sought the spot where she might indulge the sorrows which oppressed her.

At the approach she ordered Beatrice to remain, until her return.

A solemn stillness reigned, except only when interrupted by a partial breeze, which caused a rustling occasionally amidst the lofty oaks; and the choral inmates of the grove poured forth their chaunts in melancholy strains, as if in unison.

The sun-beams cast a parting glance on the lofty projecting rock, and she proceeded with a slow and broken pace to the interior part of  
the

the wood, where a fall of the river Gowy formed a beautiful cascade, the gentle murmurs of which reminded the agitated Agatha of the termination of her excursion.

On a rising ground, within a short distance of the cascade, from whence the waters winded in their course through the arched branches which entwined from its sides, Agatha reclined on a favorite trunk of a spreading oak, formed by nature and the ingenuity of Rodolphus, for the reception of the thoughtful Rambler; where, in their happier days, they had oft renewed vows of unalterable affection,



fection, and drawn ideal plans of future felicity, unmindful of the instability of worldly happiness.

The pale light of the silver moon emerging from a dark impenetrable cloud---the castle bell announcing the parting hour---followed by the distant hollow voices of the centinels on the ramparts, conspired to render the scene awfully solemn.

Struck with the singular grandeur of the surrounding images, and intent upon the purport of her nocturnal excursion, she arose from the seat, with all that exalted dignity so peculiar to her race, and from the folds of her mantle produced an urn of  
*burnished*



*burnished* gold; with the enthusiasm of a devotee, at the shrine of a departed saint, commencing a ceremony sublime and interesting.

With her arms crossed on her bosom, her tottering form bending over the urn in a supplicating posture, she thus invoked the manes of Rodolphus:---

“ Shade of my adored Rodolphus!  
“ accept the offerings of thy constant  
“ Agatha---who now, in sight of heaven,  
“ ven, to thy remembrance and unwavering faith, to a virgin shrine  
“ devotes her future life---pure and  
“ un sullied as the love I bore thee!  
“ no glittering offers, nor tyrannic  
power

“power---not proud ambition, nor  
“my sex’s weakness---shall ever  
“shake my fixed and solemn vow.”

She paused, and from her snow-white bosom drew a miniature of Rodolphus, encompassed by a case richly wrought, from the interior part she produced an auburn lock, that had once graced the forehead of the youth she loved, which, with trembling care, she deposited in the golden urn.

In her frequent rambles to this romantic seat, Agatha had discovered, in one of the rocks which surrounded the ascent to the Castle of Beeston, a cave of considerable extent; rendered

dered impervious to the curious eye of the passing stranger, by the close foliage of the sympathising willow, and sheltering leaves of the verdant evergreens.

This place she selected for depositing the sacred relic, and with a melancholy joy, conceived only by those who are susceptible of the feelings of love, and the sensibility of grief, she embraced her treasure, bedewed it plenteously with tears, and approached the entrance of the rude formed mansion of its destination.

The moon shone with uncommon lustre, and Agatha proceeded, with a degree of awe, to a small recess on

one side of the cave, formed by the hands of Rodolphus, for the reception of a few hereditary poetical manuscripts, which Agatha and he were wont to rehearse to each other.

She placed the urn beside the books, leaning her head upon her hand to recover the fatigue of mind she had already undergone, when a loud and solemn groan re-echoed through the extremities of the cavern; the light of the moon suddenly obscured, and the astonished Agatha, with difficulty supported her trembling person, by the rough sides of the recess where she stood:---A crowd of ideas instantly rushed upon her mind,

mind, and the powers of imagination pourtrayed the form of Rodolphus! ---Scarcely animate, with difficulty she returned to the entrance of the cave, and remained some time before she could proceed; awaiting, with a degree of dread, a repetition of the sound which had thus alarmed her.

At length, recollection induced her to attribute this to some casual circumstance, which the debility of her mind, from the violent exertions it had so recently undergone, had magnified to a groan; half credulous, and half convinced, she with trepidation, sought her impatient attendant.

She found Beatrice in a state of



insupportable suspense at the absence of her mistress; with whom she very freely expostulated on the danger of the evening dew, and, what was far worse in the mind of Beatrice, the dismal visions which darkness ever impressed upon her fancy.

Agatha starting at the allusion, apologized to her handmaid for causing this unnecessary alarm, and with wearied steps sought the castle, followed by the dissatisfied Beatrice, complaining in a low tone, against the folly of nightly excursions.

Beatrice, with all the affection often found in an old servant, had assumed a degree of familiarity towards her mistress

mistress, which may at first appear inconsistent; but from having been appointed her attendant in the early part of her infancy, Agatha, whose character possessed all the softer traits of her parents, thought it not beneath her to feel an affection for a faithful servant.

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**Chapter 4.**

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Girt with many a baron bold,  
Sublime their starry fronts they rear;  
And gorgeous dames, and statesman old,  
In bearded majesty appear:  
In the midst a form divine,  
Her eye proclaims her of the "Cestrian" line.

GRAY'S BARD.

---

THE bustle of preparation had some hours commenced for the reception of the courtiers, when the door of Agatha's apartment was opened by the impatient Randolph.

A series

A series of disturbed repose, the expected consequences of the last night's transaction, had caused an indisposition, which rendered her nearly incapable of undergoing this compulsory ceremony, so incompatible with her feelings for the death of Rodolphus: which she would even now have declined, had it not been for an anxiety to acquiesce with her father's desires, in circumstances which were not in themselves so very momentous; conscious that the vow she had recently made, when known, would be to him a cause of infinite grief and disappointment, as destroying his expectation of a lineal successor

cessor to the earldom, which was the utmost hope of his ambition.

The grand hall of the castle, situated on the east side of the gate of St. Werburgh, commanding, by its eminence over the surrounding turrets of the lower ward, an uninterrupted view of a fertile country, interspersed with the inferior castles of the neighbouring chiefs, and the venerable ivy-mantled pile of the monastery of Bunbury, seated on a distant eminence; was the apartment allotted for receiving the obeisance of the noble Cestrians.

The north side of this lofty hall was ornamented with a piece of tapestry,



pestry, representing King Edgar seated in a triumphal barge, rowed by eight tributary kings, from his palace, on the south bank of the sacred river Dee, to the monastery of St. John, in Chester.

At the upper end of the hall, on an elevated chair, was seated Randolph, in all the majesty of the Earl of Chester; supported on his right by Thomas de Capenhurst, cloathed in his habiliments, as abbot of the monastery of St. Werburgh, in Chester:---on his left, Sir Thomas de Cholmondeley, in a complete suit of armour of steel, inlaid with a silver border; from his helmet rose a plume of lofty white

VOL. I.                    E                    feathers,

feathers, he bore the target of the Earl, with the coat of three wheat sheafs, adopted by the chieftain's father Hugh Cyveliok, as emblematic of the fertility of the land over which he presided, and on his shoulder supported the ponderous sword of Randolph's progenitor, the famed Hugh Lupus.\*

The barons, on their entrance, took their respective seats. Roger de Toft and Matthew de Brooke, two youths peculiarly distinguished for their personal courage and martial

\* Which sword is still preserved in the British Museum.

tial dexterity, attended the knight's own person. William de Mafley and William de Warburton, priests of Rostherne and Bunbury, that of the abbot.

The loud horn proclaimed the seating of the Earl, and the dark blue standard waved on the highmost turret:---the large folding-doors were thrown open, when the lovely Agatha appeared, attired in her sable suit, with a veil flung loosely over her shoulders, flowing in a graceful train to the ground; attended by Emma Waring de Maynwaring and Isabella de Delamere, two maids whom Agatha esteemed with a sisterly affection,

formed in the early state of youth, when the mind is prone to friendship; and unpolluted by pride, or sordid selfishness.

Agatha kneeled at the throne of Randolph, and dropped a tear on his extended hand, conscious of her inability in contributing to the pleasure and gaiety of his court, and affected at the remembrance of the success of her efforts when influenced by the presence of Rodolphus.

The Earl raised her with a benignant smile, and seated her beside him; his attention was called by the entrance of Sir Richard Fitton, chief-justice of the county, introducing  
Richard

Richard de Wybunbury, the high-sheriff, accompanied by Philip de Egerton and Robert le Grosvenor.

Agatha felt a melancholy pleasure at the sight of these youths, as the friends of Rodolphus; and privately congratulated them on the probability of their honourable alliance with her most amiable companions; a blush denoted the suspicions of Isabella and Emma, and their admirers acknowledged their obligations to Agatha, for her condescension and approbation:---when turning from her friends, she beheld De Peckforton approach the Earl with an obsequious dignity, and enter into a formal conversation, before



before the termination of which, Agatha had somewhat recovered the tremor, and dismal recollection, the sight of him had occasioned:---when, with a visibly affected embarrassment, he congratulated her upon her recovery, which she received with a cold indifference, that caused him to resume his natural *hauteur*, and he placed himself by her side without waiting her permission.

The awe which Agatha ever felt in presence of De Peckforton, deterred her from requesting him to leave his situation. The significant looks of the courtiers, indicated their suspicions, and she fancied he viewed the  
surrounding

surrounding group with a scornful look of affected superiority.

Agatha, exhausted by an infinity of courtly compliments, and disgusted by the behaviour of De Peckforton, expressed to her female friends her wish to retire; when De Peckforton stretched forth his bold obtrusive arm to conduct her; his very touch thrilled her with an unaccountable horror---his restless eye, to her, seemed to speak the language of rage and disappointment---trembling, she took leave of the court, and immediately hastened through the long gallery which led to her apartments; De Peckforton muttered a few incoherent words, expressive

pressive of his passion, but Agatha retired without vouchsafing an answer; happy in being liberated from his detested intrusions, to bewail her misfortune to her chosen friends.

The evening of the day was spent with that conviviality for which our ancestors were so deservedly distinguished---De Peckforton leaving early the festive board, to ruminate on the pointed disrespect with which Agatha had treated him; and which his proud spirit was little calculated to brook, without revenge.

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**Chapter 5.**

---

Hark, hark! the tempest howls afar!  
Bursts the loud whirlwind o'er the pathless waste,  
What demon rides the stormy blast?  
Red from the lightnings livid blaze  
The "phantom" rushes on the sight;  
Then, wrapt in sudden night,  
Dissolves:---But, ah!---

OGILVIE.

---

THE inhabitants of the castle preserved the same uniform routine of domestic and military employments

as had reigned within its walls before the death of Rodolphus, excepting only the sorrowful Agatha, who had confined herself to her apartment to contemplate and arrange a few interesting epistles from the pen of Rodolphus, which she intended to preserve with the other relics in the recesses of the cavern.

De Peckforton, deep in the arts of intrigue and deception, had paid his devoirs to the Earl with unremitting assiduity, and could boast of his hypocritical exertions answering his most sanguine expectations, having obtained the good opinion of the unsuspecting Randolph, who erroneously



ously judged of mankind by the integrity of his own heart.

The love which at one time was so predominant in the mind of De Peckforton, was now, owing to the recent coolness of Agatha, mingled with a degree of revenge, which induced him to seek the possession of her person with as much avidity as if influenced by one of the noblest passions which actuate the human heart.

Bent upon gaining the summit of his wishes, he sent to request a private audience on the morrow; to which Randolph acquiesced; pleased with the vain expectation of his offers

F 2

affording

a present alleviation to the grief of Agatha, and finally restoring her to the world and himself.

As it was necessary to proceed with caution in informing Agatha of this negociation, the Earl expressed his intention of accompanying her in her evening walk to the grove.---To this infringement of her solitude, Agatha would have objected, had she not been deterred by a fear of incurring a suspicion of the intent of her visits, which in future, she purposed to make more frequent, and renew that vow which, were her father's present plan adopted, would be rendered void.

The bell, calling the people of the  
neighbouring

neighbouring hamlets to their evening devotions, brought Randolph to the door of Agatha's apartment, from whence they slowly and silently proceeded down the progressive declivity from the castle, followed by Beatrice and a male attendant, till they arrived at the wicket which gave admittance to the grove.

The Earl took the hand of Agatha, and, as they passed through the almost trackless path of the wood, sought for a seat, convenient for conversation; but the termination of the walk appeared, and he searched in vain.

"Where is it that you rest yourself from the fatigues of walking;"  
enquired:

enquired the Earl, "when you visit  
"this uncultivated wilderness."

She heard not this question, struck with a forcible recollection of the alarm she felt when last here, her steps instinctively sought the place wherein her chief happiness was centered, and the Earl followed, attributing this absence of mind to her usual melancholy.

The evening had menaced a gathering storm, which was unnoticed by the Earl, owing to his anxiety for communicating to Agatha his intentions; and her mind involved in suspense and conjecture, on the purport of this excursion, was not inclined

to.

to attend to the common occurrences of the weather.

The distant thunder rolled on their entrance of the lawn, and the big drops of scattered rain portended an approaching storm.

Randolph was surprized at the combination of rural beauty displayed within so small a space, unknown to him till now, owing to the mutual anxiety of the frequenters of the grove to conceal it; not wishing to be liable to the interruption of either friendship or prying inquisitiveness.

The Earl seated himself beside Agatha, on the bench of Rodolphus,  
pressing



pressing affectionately to his lips the hand he still retained, "Her father  
" is not surprized at his beloved  
" Agatha's partiality for this delightful  
" retirement," observed the Earl, "to the perfection of which  
" nature has so bountifully contributed---but whose charms, I am  
" fearful, serve only to enhance my  
" child's sorrows, by reminding her  
" of those joys which can never more  
" proceed from the same source.

"We were not born," continued the Earl, "my dearest Agatha, to lead  
" a life of sorrow; the sad accidents  
" we are liable to here, we must endeavour  
deavour

“deavour to overcome by partaking  
“of the social sweets that are of-  
“fered to us by a beneficent Being.”

Agatha wept abundantly at the  
foothings of her parent, who resumed,  
“Let me intreat, at least, to be some-  
“times a partner in your solitude,  
“that I may endeavour to alleviate  
“your grief, nay, in time, disperse it  
“sufficiently to incline you to that  
“situation which Heaven designed  
“you for, and thus contribute to the  
“happiness of an expecting parent.”

Agatha arose from her seat, and the  
Earl, attributing her alarm to the loud  
thunder which played over the tops  
of the distant hills, thus continued:—

“ Time flies apace, and the storm  
“ comes on; Oh! that my Agatha’s  
“ sorrow would take its flight, and  
“ that she would gratify her father, by  
“ accepting of the proffered hand of  
“ Sir Hugh de Peckforton.”

Shuddering with horror at this precipitate proposal, destructive of all her worldly happiness, Agatha, after a momentary pause, pronounced, with a solemn frantic energy, that caused Randolph to tremble, the emphatic word “ Never.”

A responsive groan issued from the neighbouring thicket---a sudden flame of continued lightning presented to her affrighted view, a figure equipped

equipped in a complete suit of armour, with the beaver down, passing with the velocity of the light which discovered him, unperceived by Randolph.

The Earl spoke---the impetuous thunder roared o'er the stupendous rock---and the affrighted Agatha swooned in the arms of the astonished Randolph.

The cries of Beatrice, and the Earl's attendant, during the intermediate stillness of the tempest, faintly echoed through the wood, in their efforts to call their lord and mistress.

An impenetrable darkness pre-  
c 2                      vailed

vailed; the rain poured in torrents through the trees; the foaming waters from the cascade vied with the roar of the rumbling thunder in their fall ---when a tremendous fire burst from the castle's heights, which illumined the expansive vale!

The Earl flew towards the castle, and left Agatha with her two attendants.---The rage of the storm abated, and the furcharged clouds unloaded their heavy waters, when a banditti darted from the wood---the male attendant attempted to defend his charge, but fell in the conflict! And Beatrice's screams of terror were silenced by the fear of death.

An.



An awful pause of a few moments ensued---the piteous state of Agatha caused a momentary sensation of compassion in the hardened breasts of these ruffians; when, after a confused whisper, and a sudden sense of danger, they cautiously placed the apparently lifeless Agatha on a mule, brought for that purpose; and the affectionate Beatrice followed the fate of her mistress, in opposition to the wishes of these inhuman desperadoes.

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**Chapter 6.**

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Nought is there under heaven's wide hollowness  
That moves more dear compassion of mind,  
Than beauty brought t' unworthy wretchedness  
By envy's means, or fortune's freaks unkind.

SPENCER.

---

AN extensive cell, from whose clay-spread floor, sprung two rows of rough-hewn pillars supporting a roof of mouldering red stone, whose apertures and disjointed appearance, caused

caused a continual apprehension of their fall; the narrow-limited light from the high embrasures, glimmered through the rusty bars of the solid iron; the walls, decorated with the ingenious labour of the undisturbed spider, except only when interrupted by the partial damps issuing from its rocky fides; here, on a couch, formed by an unskillful hand, the projecting splinters of which threatened to disturb the repose of its recumbent, by their entrance through the single worn-out coverlet, lay, void of animation, the extended form of Agatha!---over which, the good Beatrice wept, in loud, expressive woe.

Her

Her lamentations were interrupted, ---the key grated in the rusty lock--- the removal of the heavy bars resounded through the vaulted passages, when the door was opened by a man, whose ferocious aspect, and a bloody sword which he wielded in his hand, caused Beatrice to seek the extremity of the cell with precipitation; but perceiving, by his side, a female of more than common interesting appearance, bearing a salver with refreshments, she instantly returned to her charge; again losing her own fears, in her anxiety for the recovery of her mistress.

The female assisted in the charitable

able act---the wan Agatha heaved a piteous sigh---and exhausted nature happily found relief in a refreshing sleep.

The man made a motion for Eleonora, for thus was she named, to follow. Beatrice dropped upon her knees, beseeching her to stay; when, with much difficulty, their joint entreaties persuaded him to go alone, intimating as he departed, in a low hollow voice, which terrified Beatrice, his intention of returning soon.

Beatrice continued in a supplicating posture, requesting information concerning the place of their confinement. The tear of sympathy  
VOL. I. H glistened



glistened in the eye of Eleanora, and expressively waving her hand, she denoted her fear of discovery; the more communicative Beatrice gave her a regular detail of every particular that had come to her knowledge, not forgetting the loss of Rodolphus, until she came to the fatal night, the source of her present uneasiness, when she thus continued:

“ Ah! little did I think, when I  
“ and poor Robert attended our good  
“ lord and mistress to the grove, that  
“ this misfortune was to befall us;  
“ but my last night’s dream boded no  
“ good; for I thought”---

“ Hush,” interrupted Eleanora,  
with

with a degree of anxious impatience,  
“sure I heard a noise, quick, good  
“lady, quick.”---

“Well then, I and poor Robert  
“stood at the gate a long time in all  
“the thunder and rain; at length, as  
“neither of them returned, I was fear-  
“ful my lady might catch cold; as  
“to my lord, he’s hardy enough,  
“God knows, for I’ve heard Robert  
“say,”---

Again Eleanora was obliged to re-  
mind her.---“At last,” resumed Bea-  
trice, “there came a huge light from  
“the castle, we were then at the end  
“of the wood, and heard my lord  
“call Robert; so we found him, and

“ my dear mistress almost dead beside  
“ him; when we came up, my lord  
“ blessed and kissed her, and giving  
“ strict charge to take care of her,  
“ flew, for all the world like the light-  
“ ning, towards the castle---O Lord!  
“ how was I frightened!---

“ Hasten your relation, I entreat  
“ you,” cried Eleanora, “ for indeed  
“ I have reason to think that if it is  
“ known I have been here, this will be  
“ the last interview we shall have.”

“ O dear! why so?” enquired Be-  
atrice---“ My poor dear lady, how she  
“ starts,” turning to Agatha, “ Well,  
“ I was saying as how there we were,  
“ the castle blazing---the great bell  
in

“ in the western turret ringing---the  
“ thunder and rain roaring and his-  
“ ing---and I, trembling, helped Ro-  
“ bert to get my mistress on the seat,  
“ ---when there jumped out of the  
“ wood four of the frightfulest look-  
“ ing men I ever saw; our Robert  
“ drew his sword, and fought nobly;  
“ but four is too many for one man,  
“ you know, and, alas! they killed  
“ him!”---here she sobbed audibly---  
“ I swooned when I saw the blood,  
“ and scarcely recovered until I found  
“ myself and mistress in this terrible  
“ vault; perhaps never to return.”---  
She railed against the perverseness of  
human events, and Eleanora attempt-  
ed

ed to comfort her, casting a piteous look on the face of Agatha; when a distant sound of quick approaching footsteps caused the timid stranger to tremble with fear; the contagion instantly spread to Beatrice.---The impatience of those on the outside retarded their progress by their haste to admit themselves; the wards of the rusty lock, yielding to the force of the half entering key, rendered its opening impracticable; when a voice, in an authoritative, passionate tone, ordered them to proceed to force; attributing this partial check to the machinations of the innocent inmates of the cell.

The hinges gave way to the united efforts



efforts of a party of soldiers, who seized upon Eleanora with a degree of savage freedom, which induced Beatrice to interfere for her defence, in opposition to her affecting entreaties.

The clamours of both parties awoke Agatha to a sense of her misfortunes; that moment the door closed on the mysterious Eleanora, on whom, in the course of the contest, the soldiery poured forth a torrent of abuse, as one who had, by her art, gained admission into this room, in direct contradiction to the orders of the superior of the place.

Beatrice exclaimed loudly against them for their barbarity, whilst the  
found

found of their departure remained, and nothing but the faint broken voice of Agatha was heard in the stillness which succeeded; Beatrice, with a mixture of sorrow and delight, beheld her mistress much refreshed by her repose.

After Agatha had recovered the first shock of her astonishment at the scene around her, Beatrice related her imperfect account of their arrival at this dreary cell, together with an exaggeration of the circumstances which had recently befallen her, concluding with reminding Agatha of her own constant objections to the walk in the grove.

Agatha

Agatha trembled at the horrors of her situation, and shed tears at the recollection of her father's grief for her loss; the fate of whom, and the Castle of Beeston, from the irresistible fury of the devouring element, dwelt upon her thoughts, and the disagreeable sensations of agitated suspense formed an additional weight to her sorrows.

Had Rodolphus been living, his rage for the misfortunes Agatha now suffered would have been unbounded, and might have proved fatal--she felt a melancholy pleasure at this reflection---mentally called upon the power of Heaven for protection---and an expecting hope of a liberation by

the indefatigable researches of the Earl, produced a degree of resolution in her disposition till now unknown, because till now untried.



## SONNET.

HOPE's pleasing flatt'ry heaves the drooping head  
Of dire affliction, struck by ruthless woe!  
Cheers the despair of the departing bed,  
And bids the gloom of sorrow quit our brow!

Within the horrors of the darksome cave,  
Where noxious vapours chill the passing air,  
A cheering balm, to prince or humble slave,  
With equal kindness, HOPE affords a share!

When beauty pleads—then meek-eyed pity weeps,  
Watching each throb of her disturbed breast,  
Conveys assistance in refreshing sleeps,  
And all her sorrows thus are lull'd to rest.  
Persuasive HOPE, with yielding pity's pow'r,  
Sustain the courage of a drooping flow'r.

---

**Chapter 7.**

---

Th' unbusied shepherd, stretch'd beneath the  
hawthorn,  
His careless limbs thrown out in wanton ease,  
With thoughtless gaze perusing th' arch'd heaven,  
And idly whistling while his sheep feed round him,  
Enjoys a sweeter shade than that of canopies  
Hemm'd in by cares, and shook by storms of  
treason.

HILL.

---

ON the Earl's arrival at the castle  
he immediately dispatched some at-  
tendants to conduct his daughter, and



then assisted his soldiery in checking the progress of the flames.

They raged with unabated fury for a considerable time, but the immense thickness of the walls confined it to one tower, in which the apartments of Agatha were situated.

The Earl was much affected and delighted that his daughter had escaped this dreadful disaster, which must have been fatal had she been in her room; and as it is natural for a mind impressed with the pure dictates of religion to trace the hand of Providence in every moment of trial or preservation, Randolph retired to his closet to return thanks to the Deity  
for

for the safety of his daughter, in which pious act he was engaged, when the door was burst open, and the event of his daughter's capture precipitately disclosed to him---a sudden horror came over him, his head sunk upon his hands, in their supplicating posture, and a momentary inanimation took place.

The whole garrison left their posts, and the alarm was given to the surrounding country.

The chieftains flew in every direction, for Randolph reigned in the hearts of his subjects, and no act for him was compulsory---Sir Hugh de Peckforton was foremost in the throng.

To

To a good constitution Randolph possessed unusual strength of mind; he summoned all his resolution, but all was insufficient; a lingering fever, produced from excess of grief, and great bodily fatigue, seized him, and his manly strength sunk a prey to a temporary disease.---In his ravings, his Agatha, his darling daughter, was his constant theme.

In the course of a few days the fever abated, and the seers declared him to be in a state of convalescence.

De Peckforton never quitted the castle, but affected a sullen grief.

The Earl's weakness still continued, but his great mind resumed a calm

calm serenity, and the powers of religion, aided by his experience in the casualties of this mortal life, served to reconcile him to his misfortunes.

The hope of recovering his daughter by some unexpected event was clouded by the uncertainty of her fate, or the injury she might sustain in the power of ruffians.

He offered the most extravagant reward for her restoration, and denounced the greatest vengeance on her destroyers.

The customary levees were suppressed at the castle; all appearances of joy were fled: each appointed day, which was formerly marked with  
convivialty

convivialty and rejoicing, was now darkened with a gloomy comparison between the past and present.



## ODE.

THE face of joy once graced the castle's heights;  
The joyous chieftain, and as joyous squire,  
In friendship lost each pang or warlike ire,  
And laughs re-echoed round the festive rites.  
The tales of battles fought—or battles won,  
Which caus'd on distant shores their foes to bleed,  
Their youth excited to the warlike deed,  
Proving each father has no dastard son.  
Hail, blest example! it is thee we find,  
The first, the greatest gem, in men of pow'r;  
For when our calling's great, our ev'ry hour  
Should prove the right way best to all mankind.  
And who more em'lous than our Randolph good,  
Who check'd his sovereign when he found him wrong,  
And thought to right respect could e'er belong  
As much to peasant as to man of blood!

With



With such a prince, who to the conqueror's breast

Calls mercy---pity---and their gen'rous train;

E'en whilst his foes must bleed, can feel the pain,  
And call on peace to grant her healing rest.

Who would refuse with men like him to toil,

And fight against a bold invading foe?

'Tis here the energy of war doth glow;

'Tis here true courage finds a gen'rous foil.

Alas! sad grief invades bold ardour's place!

A dreary gloom stalks round the castle walls,

Down Randolph's furrow'd cheek a tear now falls,  
And o'er his vet'ran brow we sorrow trace.

When age beneath affliction's burthen bends,

Mem'ry her busy restless power imparts;

Times which are gone impress our drooping hearts,

We moan past pleasures and departed friends.

---

**Chapter 8.**

---

No matter where; of comfort no man speak,  
Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs;  
Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes  
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth.

SHAKSPEARE.

---

NEXT to her devotions Agatha  
esteemed her filial duty; the pains  
and anxieties of a doating parent,  
during the feebleness of helpless in-  
fancy, were hitherto amply repaid  
by

by the fond attentions of the dutiful daughter.

Although the innocent cause of her father's woe, she imputed his sorrows to herself; and, since the death of her adored Rodolphus, would have been totally regardless of her own fate, had it not been for her filial affection.

She sat sometime involved in sorrow, displaying to her imagination the unavailing complaints of her injured father, and wept abundantly. Beatrice, on the cold floor, her eyes fixed in a kind of sullen stupor, watched the approaching morn through an aperture near the roof.

A star glittering through its centre caught the attention of Agatha; she observed its singular brightness to her silent attendant; who, ever influenced by the powers of superstition, arose from her humble sitting, and viewed the room with an enquiring eagerness, which induced Agatha to ask the reason:---she again resumed her lowly seat, with an evident air of disappointment.

“Plague light upon these brutal  
“caitiffs,” she exclaimed, “why did  
“they not leave a form to sit upon,  
“that I might have peeped through  
“the chink in the wall; for I am sure  
“that bright star bodes us some good;  
“for

“for I’ve heard as how a bright  
“star, at the break of day, is ever a  
“goodly sight to see.”

“Ah! Beatrice;” exclaimed Agatha, “our prospect affords no luminary to enlighten it---the damp walls  
“of this unknown prison---the horrors of expecting death---or, great  
“Heaven! perhaps worse!”---here she shuddered with apprehension, a sudden thought seemed to occur to her, and she requested Beatrice to assist in removing the couch to the side of the wall under the embrasure.  
---They commenced their work, the gentle limbs of Agatha seemed to have lost their effeminacy, and taken the  
strength.



strength of powerful manhood, excited by the ardour of impatient discovery.

The heavy piece of furniture was at length removed to the wished-for situation :---Agatha trembled with expectation; Beatrice rendered steady the pile on the uneven floor, by placing judiciously some of the loose stones which bestrewed it.---Agatha fixed her foot on the lower frame, requesting the assistance of Beatrice in ascending; she dissuaded her from the difficult attempt, boasting of her own alacrity in climbing, being well practised in scrambling up the rugged sides of the rock :---Agatha assented, and

and Beatrice, silently and cautiously, had nearly gained the summit, her hands about to embrace the bars of iron---each bosom throbbing with expectancy:---when, lo! a figure in armour appeared at the anterior of the embrasure:---the ill-jointed wood-work divided, and the heavy Beatrice fell at the feet of Agatha!---

Consternation and horror rendered them incapable of either speech or action for some time; at length Beatrice, recovering from her astonishment, and not having sustained any material injury from her fall, began to collect the scattered pieces, and  
lay

lay them in their former place, fearful of the consequences of a discovery of their intentions; and, to the surprise of Agatha, in the course of a few minutes, she had joined them together so as to look as if they had never been asunder.

Agatha took her former seat, nearly fainting with excess of fear at the appearance she had again seen, not doubting in her own mind but that it was the same figure she had seen the preceding night, which had thus haunted her since the death of Rodolphus.

Beatrice blamed the star for bringing

ing them into this dilemma, and hoped  
“the man in iron would not betray  
“them.”

They had scarcely recovered their former serenity, when the man who had made his appearance with the bloody sword, whilst conducting Eleonora, entered the room, followed by two soldiers with torches to lead them to new apartments.

Agatha, dreading the consequences of this sudden removal, diffidently requested to remain in the cell; but Beatrice entreated her to acquiesce, expressing her certainty, in a whisper, “that the gentlemen could not re-  
“move them to a dungeon more dis-

“mal than that in which they were at  
“present confined.”

They resigned themselves therefore to their uncertain fate : Agatha leaning on the arm of her attendant, whilst the savage-looking soldier, the terror of Beatrice, led the way ; the two others followed with their torches.

“Are we to go through the wood,  
“or through the subterraneous passage?” enquired one of the soldiers ; to which the leader did not vouchsafe an answer : at length their torches discovered a passage of considerable extent, not affording a glimpse of its termination ; the vaulted roof re-echoed the hollow sound of their footsteps,



steps, and the croaking reptiles of the earth oft interrupted their course.

“Remind William of his promise,” whispered the soldier, who had spoke before to his comrade; but he told him to wait till they arrived at the door, which, in their course, they were to go through.

Agatha perceived by the glimmering of the torches, inscriptions over several small doors which they had passed, and thought she perceived, through a shattered crevice in one, the remains of a coffin; she concealed her surmises from Beatrice, knowing the effect it would have on her superstitious fancy; nevertheless,

theless, she herself thought, that the term of her miserable existence was now drawing near its close.

They arrived at an arched entrance, whose appearance bespoke a more modern structure than the surrounding stone work:---The leader drew a key from his side, flung open the folding-doors, and the approaching light discovered an uncommon large coffin, under a rich canopy of decayed black velvet, profusely trimmed with ornamental gold.---A coat of mail, once worn by the departed knight, was placed at the head of the receptacle of his earthly remains, and two coffins of inferior note lay beside him.

Agatha,

Agatha, supported by the quaking frame of the terrified Beatrice, stood, with a degree of religious fear, over this awful lesson of mortality, almost lost in a labyrinth of surmise.---A faint idea of the armorial bearings, which decorated the sides of the mausoleum, came across her mind, but the mental fatigues she had undergone had debilitated her powers of recollection.

She was roused from her reverie by the guards yielding to the pressing cries of Beatrice: they advanced within the arch-way, and closed the doors; the leader then opened the opposite gates, and, with difficulty, forced Beatrice past the coffins.

They

They now found themselves at the foot of a flight of steps; and, whilst their conductors were employed in removing the accumulated dust on this unfrequented approach, which had nearly levelled the ascent, Beatrice seated herself on the ground, and Agatha leaned on the projecting rail.

---

**Chapter 9.**

---

\* \* \* \* \* 'Tis dreadful!

How rev'rend is the face of this tall pile,  
Whose antient pillars rear their marble heads  
To bear aloft its arch'd and ponderous roof,  
By its own weight made stedfast and immoveable.

CONGREVE.

---

THE rubbish which impeded their way being removed, Agatha observed that the steps were formed of the solid rock---Beatrice, casting a cautious look behind her, ascended the  
stairs



stairs, which conducted them into a large octangular chapel, whose towering pillars supported a vaulted roof richly decorated with antient sculpture.

Agatha expressed her surprize at this unexpected sight, but was silenced by a forbidding frown from their conductor, who desired the soldier to call Maud.

From a small door on the opposite side, came, with a hobbling gait, a woman, whose hard features bespoke a strong affinity to their brutal leader; she viewed Agatha with a prying curiosity which disgusted her, and, turning to her attendant, cast a scornful

scornful look expressive of superiority, which Beatrice was at this juncture too much alarmed to notice.

The heraldical ornaments again caught the attention of Agatha; she started---her limbs refused their office---a fixed horror was depicted upon her lovely visage---and, in the arms of her attendant, she wildly pronounced the name of DE PECKFORTON!---After a short pause, the tears trickled down her pallid cheeks, she raised her heavy eyes, and, in a gentle whisper, uttered, "O gracious  
" Heaven, impress my heart with a  
" pious submission to thy will; be my  
" comforter, be my guide, by instill-

“ing into me a portion of that greatness of soul which ever inspired my Sire in time of danger!”

Owing to her detestation of the character of its master, Agatha had never accompanied the Earl her father in his visits to the mansion of De Peckforton; therefore it was the armorial bearings alone which could give her an idea of the nature and cause of her imprisonment.

“Gracious virgin!” at the termination of her mistress’s exclamation, cried Beatrice, “are we at the castle of De Peckforton?---Heaven preserve my mistress.”---

“Yes she’ll be preserved, I dare say,

"say," retorted the unfeeling Maud, "but mount the rostrum."---She then ascended the steps of the reading-desk; within the wainscot, at the back of which, she opened a sliding pannel: through this she proceeded, followed by Agatha and Beatrice, into an anti-chamber, and from thence into a large apartment hung round with a range of tapestry, which the light of the approaching morning through the horn-worked casements now rendered visible.

The furniture bespoke the rude workmanship of the conqueror's time; a couch occupied each side of the apartment; an immense large chest

chest lay under the casement; three chairs, whose lofty backs were formed to add a dignity to their possessors, were widely separated.

Though preferable to the cell they had lately left in point of accommodation, still to Agatha it was far more gloomy; and the suspense and uncertainty she experienced there, were sensations of pleasure when compared to those she now felt.

Amidst the griefs attendant on our race,

As one by one they solemnly appear,

Our present sufferings latent griefs erase,

And present ills are all the ills we fear.

Maud opened a small closet in the anti chamber, where there lay a considerable



considerable quantity of various articles of dress, and another with the requisites for the table, informing her, that their meals should be brought regularly; adding her wish to know what refreshment they would now chuse:---Agatha proudly refused; Beatrice rather reluctantly coincided, and Maud retired.

Agatha wept over her misfortunes, whilst Beatrice was busily employed in examining the interior of the apartments.---She then endeavoured to open the chest before observed, but its ponderous lid refused to yield to her attempts; its lock was of brass, and appeared to have no key-hole.

key-hole. On its top were a few lines in rude characters, which were Arabic to the unlettered Beatrice--- still her insatiable curiosity, which, in the midst of danger, would sometimes conquer her timidity, induced her to request her mistress to decypher them; but Maud again creaked the sliding pannel, and made her appearance.

Beatrice now prevailed upon her mistress to take a small portion of wine and bread, and after she had herself satisfied the cravings of exhausted nature, desired Maud to depart, observing, " Nobody had the honour of waiting on her Lady but herself,

“ herself, excepting indeed the Lady  
“ Maynwaring or the Lady Dela-  
“ mere.”

Agatha noticed the vanity of her handmaid by a faint smile; and expressed a wish to be alone.---Beatrice and Maud retiring, held the following discourse in the anti-chamber:---

“ I wish I could leave you;” cried Maud, “ for I can’t abide the thoughts  
“ of sleeping here; but my Lord says  
“ I must, though I told him that it  
“ was impossible for you to escape,  
“ and if you did attempt such a thing,  
“ you’d break your neck.”---“ Which  
“ would not answer his Lordship’s  
“ purpose I suppose,” observed Bea-  
trice;

trice;---“ I can't think what you must  
“ come here to plague us for,” not  
noticing Beatrice's sarcasm, “ as if one  
“ had not disagreeable things enough,  
“ without sleeping in this”---here she  
checked herself, muttering a wish it  
might not be for a long time.

— Beatrice felt alarmed and disap-  
pointed at not hearing the epithet she  
was going to apply to the apartment,  
when resuming the subject,---“ Truly,  
“ Mrs. Maud, as you say, this is not  
“ one of the most pleasant apartments  
“ in the world, but 'tis quiet.”---  
“ Quiet!” interrupted Maud, starting,  
“ how do you know it is not quiet,  
“ but,” as if again recollecting herself,  
“ I'm

"I'm to hold no converse with you,  
"my Lord says."

Beatrice retired to her couch, impressed with the certainty that there were some circumstances appertaining to these rooms which Maud durst not divulge; and the other attendant stretched her haggard bones on a few boards in the anti-chamber.



---

 Chapter 10.
 

---

Darkness, thou first great parent of us all;  
 Thou art our great original;  
 Since from thy universal womb  
 Does all thou shad'st below---thy numerous off-  
 spring come.

In thy serener shades our ghosts delight,  
 And court the umbrage of the night;  
 In vaults and gloomy caves they stray,  
 But fly the morning beams, and sicken at the day.

YALDEN'S HYMN TO DARKNESS.

---

THE Castle of Peckforton was  
 built upon the highmost brow of the  
 neighbouring hills, which now take  
 their

their name from that mansion, not a vestige of which remains.

It was built in the time of Alfred, to watch the motions of an entrenchment on the insulated rock, on which the Castle of Beeston was afterwards erected.

Agatha and Beatrice had been the inhabitants of this tower for the space of three days, without any interruption, when the fourth evening, the pannel was shook by the surly soldier, who demanded the presence of Maud.

Immediately on her departure Beatrice again requested Agatha to translate the words engraved on the brazen

plate: from her parent had she learned the Saxon character, and the affinity of the English language at that period, enabled her to make out the following mysterious words:

NO KEY MY PONDEROUS LID CAN OPE,  
MY OAKEN LINING GUARDS MY OAKEN  
TRUNK:

A SECRET DWELLS WITHIN MY \* \* \*  
AND DEATH OR LIFE \* \* \* \* \*

The remainder of the two last lines were too much injured by the corroding hand of time to be decyphered.

“Aye aye,” when she understood the words, “this I’ll be bound is the thing that Maud meant; some enchantment

"chantment or another belongs to  
"this piece of trumpery."

"I conceive," replied Agatha,  
"that these words are allusive to the  
"riches which the trunk may have  
"contained."

"Yes, but why death or life?"

"Why, certainly, gold too often  
"has both within its power," ob-  
served Agatha:

"Well, I wish we had enough to  
"secure the latter---death will come  
"of course, and perhaps sooner than  
"we expect it."

The conversation here closed, ow-  
ing to the solemn bell not inaptly re-  
minding them of the hour of repose,  
and

and the return of Maud, who silently flung herself upon her couch, without satisfying the curiosity of Beatrice on the reason of her departure.

Agatha felt her mind disturbed in contemplating the nature of the mysterious words on the chest. The lamp which burnt in her apartment during the night darted its faint gleams on the brass lock;---a rustling noise seemed to proceed either from the room underneath, or from within the trunk:---the couch trembled with the agitation of its recumbent; when the lock divided; and, with an almost imperceptible motion, the ponderous lid heaved.

Agatha



Agatha resolved, in awful silence, to await the event: in the course of a few minutes it was so far open as to discover from within a faint light--- a large hand grasped its side, and, without moving, remained for some minutes---the bell struck one---when Agatha's attention was called to the further part of the apartment, at the foot of the couch of Beatrice, by a movement in the arras, and a wind which proceeded from behind it blew out the lamp; no light remained except what issued from the trunk, whose top had now ascended to its utmost height.

The hand again moved, with a degree

gree of trepidation, and a male figure, clad in a purple vest, part of which served to cover his head, arose above the chest.

The tapestry now extended from the wall, and a female of a wan, but beauteous aspect, appeared from behind it. She proceeded towards the figure, who presented a scroll, which she accepted, returning a similar paper which she drew from her vestment, they then looked on the couch where Agatha lay, and alternately sighed; the female retired; the male figure, through a small aperture in his robe, cast a lingering look on Agatha: the lid closed, and total darkness prevailed.

Agatha

Agatha was lost in a maze of conjecture on the scene she had just beheld, and on the good or evil which it portended. That they were, whether natural or supernatural, friendly to her, she wished to believe: if the latter, she confided in the rectitude of her own mind: if the former, and friendly, why not explain themselves, and comfort her with that information.

The morning now began to dawn, and the domestic choristers superseded the shrieks of the owl and fluttering bat.

---

**Chapter II.**

---

Friendship! mysterious cement of the soul!  
Sweet'ner of life, and solder of society!  
I owe thee much. Thou hast deserv'd from me  
Far, far beyond what I can ever pay.  
Oft have I prov'd the labour of thy love,  
And the warm efforts of the gentle heart.

BLAIR.

---

THE female character, prone to every finer feeling of sensibility, yields to the power of each shock or grief that presents itself. The beautiful Isabella de Delamere was the first

first of the friends of our heroine who heard of this melancholy catastrophe. Tears alone were unavailing; the nature of the elopement was singular; the cause appeared obvious, and, with the delightful energetic enthusiasm of friendship, she thus addressed the mutual friend of Agatha.

---

ISABELLA DE DELAMERE

TO

EMMA WARING DE MAYNWARING.

AMIDST the numerous misfortunes attendant upon our sex, none strike more against our happiness than beauty! exposed to the view of mankind.



kind, uncontrollable in their desires, how often are we sacrificed to their brutal passions.

O my beloved Emma! the mutual friend of our happy juvenile days---the delight of all who had the felicity of knowing her---the good, the generous Agatha is torn from us by ruffians unknown!

The Earl, whose grey hairs were approaching calmly to the grave, is nearly deranged with sorrow.---My tears flow with the afflicting intelligence I communicate, and my bosom heaves with my griefs.

I like not De Peckforton!---Although my Sire blames me for rash conjecture,

conjecture, on a man of his fame.---  
Fame is a bauble often prostituted to  
the basest of purposes, and attained  
by art, to perpetrate villainy unsus-  
pected.

Philip de Egerton has been with  
me this morning; he coincides in this  
opinion, though so contradictory to  
my father's; and his soul burns with  
impatient ardour to release our friend  
from her enthrallment, if at the Castle  
of De Peckforton.

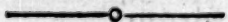
On this my suggestion, his counte-  
nance became fierce, his eye then  
beamed pity, and his whole frame be-  
came agitated. As yet we have  
formed no plan for our enquiry; for  
owing

owing to the character Sir Hugh de Peckforton has gained by his cunning and hypocrisy, and the uncertainty of the charge, we must be circumspect in our proceedings; therefore from your judgement and discretion we expect much, waiting for which, we remain, in a state of inactive suspense,

Your afflicted friends,

ISABELLA DE DELAMERE,

PHILIP DE EGERTON.



EMMA WARING DE MAYNWARING

TO

ISABELLA DE DELAMERE.

A few days was to have united me to Sir Robert le Grosvenor, and an epistle

epistle had I penned to have solicited both the venerable Earl and my too lovely friend to the nuptials,---Oh fate! how unsearchable are thy decrees! those moments marked by weak-fighted human nature for happiness, are too often darkened by dismal despair.

Dear Isabella, thy sorrows are equalled only by mine, except indeed our lineal Earl; his afflictions claim heart-felt pity from his subjects; and, I fear, like an aged oak, bends to the pitiless storm which oppresses him.

Sir Hugh de Peckforton has my suspicions; his conduct to Agatha, on the day of audience, was marked  
by

by rudeness, and his wonted mask fell from his dissimulating countenance.

Le Grosvenor fires at the suspicion---proposes, with our friend Sir Philip de Egerton, personally to wait upon Sir Hugh, and to challenge him with the deed.

The loss of Rodolphus fell heavy upon Agatha's gentle heart, unused to affliction; what then her present situation must occasion I shudder to think; still her spirit is so exalted, and her soul so pure, that heaven would receive it before earth could contaminate it. My thoughts---my words---my prayers---all tend to Agatha.

I this morning took a melancholy  
ramble



ramble to the shepherd's family on the confines of the park, who owe to her bounty and benevolent heart their present subsistence.

The good man, aided by his first-born son, now a full-grown youth, I found busied in their agricultural employment; on my appearance they desisted; my countenance bespoke a grief which seemed instantly to spread over theirs. I told, in few words, my melancholy narrative;---the poor man leaned his head on the spade he still retained, fetching a deep groan, which brought from the cottage the housewife, with a child at her bosom:

She learned the cause, and sunk in the arms of her son.---The youth exclaimed loudly, that was she on earth he would recover her.---The father shook his head, and the poor mother's eyes cast a doubtful glance at her son's impetuous assertion.

This scene affected me so much as to induce me to recite it; subjects, though trivial, if marked by corresponding sentiments, become interesting.

I enclose a note from Sir Robert le Grosvenor to Sir Philip, and trust their joint efforts will either criminate or clear the name of Sir Hugh.---My heart,

heart, so much oppressed, seeks for  
condolence from your sympathy;  
and, with devotion pure, I offer  
prayers for the preservation of our  
lost friend.

Affectionately,

EMMA WARING DE MAYNWARING.

---

**Chapter 12.**

---

His converse fullness did seem to silence,  
His thoughts, all serving but to serve himself;  
And yet, 'midst this, when great occasion call'd,  
A fluent speech would grace the reptile's tongue,  
Or gen'rous smiles would wanton o'er his cheek,  
Playing the hypocrite with those he loath'd;  
For where he fawn'd there most his mischief  
boded.

B.

---

THIS correspondence produced an interview, and Sir Hugh was visited by Sir Robert le Grosvenor and Sir Philip de Egerton.

“ We

“ We have waited upon Sir Hugh  
“ de Peckforton,” observed Sir Phi-  
lip, “ to condole him upon the loss  
“ he has recently sustained, by the  
“ outrageous attack on the Lady  
“ Agatha.”

“ I thank my friends for their  
“ kindness; my respect and love for  
“ Earl Randolph and his daughter  
“ is unbounded, my obligations in-  
“ numerable.---I suppose it is my as-  
“ sistance to recover her, that you  
“ solicit; willingly---myself and vas-  
“ sals, if any clue you can trace, are  
“ ready at a moment's warning; and  
“ in no pursuit should we be more  
“ ardent, than in restoring virtue to  
honour.



"honour.---My heart is afflicted, and  
"I tremble for the life of the Earl."

"Your seat here, Sir Hugh, is  
"most beautifully situated;" observed Sir Robert le Grosvenor.

Sir Hugh, aware of their errand, excited his whole force of deception, and anticipated the favour Le Grosvenor would have solicited, by observing,

"True, Sir Robert, and, as perhaps you have not seen the interior  
"apartments, permit me to conduct  
"you through my castle."

Sir Philip and Sir Robert eyed each other with a melancholy surprise.

"You

"You do us honour," replied Sir Philip, "and we accept of your offer."

The access to the apartments allotted to Agatha, was so designed, by the ingenuity of their original contriver, as to be unknown to most of the inhabitants of the mansion; on viewing which, no one could really suppose, when he entered the chapel, as its rotundity exactly corresponded with the tower, that there were rooms beyond it; and no entrance did De Peckforton himself know to them but through the sliding pannel in the reading desk.

Sir Hugh conducted them through  
the

the various suit of rooms, omitting only those that were hid by the contrivance of the architect, until they arrived at the chapel.

These apartments were intended as places of imprisonment, in those days, when the lord of the land ruled with an uncontrollable rod, over that proportion of mankind, who were born to no enjoyments, but what their labours afforded them.---

The vaulted passage served as a private approach, for the miserable victims of their cruelty and rapine.

On their entrance of the chapel, Sir Hugh started, fearful that Maud might appear from the pannel, upon  
hearing

hearing voices; his wonted recollection failed him, his countenance changed, and became so agitated, as to call forth the observation of the youths his visitors: He answered them not---when Maud, instead of appearing at the wainscoting, came in his presence through the regular entrance, and De Peckforton was indebted for this escape to the ingenuity and wit of Hubert.---She immediately retired on seeing company.

“You’ll excuse me, knights;” observed Sir Hugh, ever ready on emergent occasions, “the tombs of our ancestors strike awe in every breast, but where the mind recalls

“departed parents to its view, our  
“feelings oft overpower us.---My  
“usual prayers, ever since my pa-  
“rent’s interment here, I have of-  
“fered in my drawing-room, and  
“never have sufficiently recovered  
“the loss of those supports to visit  
“this chapel since their demise.

They then left the place, and the  
two youths mounted their steeds,  
firmly, but erroneously, convinced  
of the integrity of De Peckforton.

Unfortunate Agatha, so near being  
released, and yet cruel fate forbad  
the accomplishment!



---

**Chapter 13.**

---

The lowest and most abject thing in fortune  
Stands still in hopes, lives not in fear :  
The lamentable change is from the best,  
The worst returns to better.

SHAKESPEARE.

---

AS night's sable curtain brings  
sleep to the eyelids of the happy, so  
the opening day, to the restless and  
unfortunate, calls exhausted nature  
to repose.

Maud was again sent for, and again was Beatrice's curiosity excited, not aware of the critical situation they were then in, or that their friends were so near them.

"I am afraid, my good Lady, this  
"old haggard housewife's frequent  
"leaving us is not with the best in-  
"tent in the world."

Agatha observed, she was perfectly indifferent whilst De Peckforton kept a distance so respectful; being in hopes he repented of the violent measures adopted; and, under the influence of that idea, would permit her to depart, upon a  
solemn

solemn promise not to divulge the author of her confinement to an exasperated parent.

Fate seemed to foil the hope of its victim as soon as formed; the pannel was opened with trepidation, and the surly soldier, their former conductor, rudely entered, presenting Agatha with a letter, to which he was to wait for an immediate answer.

Fearful of further frustration of his intentions, De Peckforton resolved, the moment Sir Philip and Sir Robert had departed, to commence his projected plans.

“Inform your master, the daughter of Earl Randolph vouchsafes

“not

“not an answer to this epistle, until  
“she has well considered its con-  
“tents.” Agatha replied with that  
dignity and elevation of expression,  
which even silenced the expostu-  
lation of this rough instrument of De  
Peckforton’s crimes, and he retired.

“Now,” cried Beatrice, “you’ll  
“see whether he’ll let us go or no.  
“I wish we had not talked about it;  
“for I dreamt such a dream last  
“night---I thought I was in the air  
“flying---and indeed, I believe that  
“will be the only means of escape we  
“shall ever have from this place.”

“Do, Beatrice, cease this non-  
“sense, when events of so much  
“greater

“greater moment should occupy  
“your attention.”

Beatrice shrugged her shoulders at this reproof from her mistress, and thought few things of so much consequence as a dream.

The dread of its contents deterred Agatha for a considerable time from breaking the seal, at length her fears yielding to her suspense she read the following epistle.

SIR HUGH DE PECKFORTON

TO THE

LADY AGATHA.

“That I must have incurred your  
“displeasure from the violent rash  
“act



“act which I have committed, to  
“gain your hand, is inevitable; but  
“be assured, my noble Lady, that  
“De Peckforton will never take a  
“base advantage of the treasure in  
“his possession, therefore humbly  
“solicits an interview with his fair  
“captive on the morrow.”

Agatha was astonished at the sub-  
missive style in which this letter was  
couched, but at the same time sighed  
at the recollection of his hypocrisy  
and unconquerable passions---fearful  
of rousing which, she wrote the fol-  
lowing answer.

LADY AGATHA

TO

SIR HUGH DE PECKFORTON.

“ If Sir Hugh de Peckforton will  
 “ permit the Lady Agatha to depart  
 “ to her afflicted parent, Sir Hugh’s  
 “ acknowledged friend and patron,  
 “ unmolested; she will enter into a  
 “ solemn engagement never to di-  
 “ vulge the place of her confine-  
 “ ment, or the unfortunate cause  
 “ thereof.

“ Sir Hugh de Peckforton’s own  
 “ feelings must convince him, that  
 “ the coercive means he has adopted  
 “ can never tend to a matrimonial  
 VOL. I. R “ alliance,

"alliance, from which the Lady

"Agatha shrinks with unspeakable

"horror, and upon Sir Hugh de

"Peckforton's honor she now alone

"relies."

Agatha felt her mind so much depressed from accumulating anxieties, and her last night's broken slumbers, that, in the noon day, she expressed a wish to Beatrice of being alone, that her debilitated form might have a partial refreshment by sleep.

Beatrice retired into the anti-chamber, and Agatha's sorrows sunk into a temporary trance.

## Chapter 14.

True; I talk of dreams;  
Which are the children of an idle brain,  
Begot of nothing but vain phantasy,  
Which is as thin of substance as the air,  
And more inconstant than the wind.

SHAKSPEARE.

BEATRICE found Maud at her  
distaff, singing over the old ditties of  
the times, but the volubility of Aga-  
tha's handmaid soon stopped the vo-  
cal powers of their female gaoler.

"Home!"

R 2

"Mistress

“ Mistress Maud,” cried Beatrice,  
“ the night we had the pleasure of  
“ being conducted through those  
“ charming vaults, before I had the  
“ honour of being introduced to  
“ you, I saw a young lady, who be-  
“ haved very kind to us.”

“ Yes; I dare say she would for-  
“ sooth; any thing to cross, vex, and  
“ perplex Sir Hugh; but she has ne-  
“ ver left her own room since, my  
“ dear.---My sister is as badly off as  
“ me for that, she is forced to watch  
“ her as I do you.---Mischief light  
“ upon her; our plague never be-  
“ gan than my master sent for her  
“ home.”

“ Home!



“Home! mistress Maud.”

“Home! did I say, mistress inquisitive; go sleep with your mistress, and hold your tongue.”

Beatrice, in vain endeavoured to lead Maud to a discovery, but she observed an unconquerable silence.

At length, thinking that company without conversation was more irksome than being alone, she softly glided into her mistress' apartment, and closed the door.

In this solitude Beatrice was led to consider in what part of the castle the tower they occupied was situated; the immense thickness of the walls, and the elevation of the horn-work  
light

light in the embrasure, rendered it a task of some difficulty to discover; but opportunity, and all powerful curiosity prevailed, and Beatrice commenced an undertaking which required all her ingenuity to accomplish.

Her eye caught one of the antient chairs, which she gently placed on the mysterious chest; a deep sigh from the sleeping Agatha served to caution her in her proceeding, and, with great circumspection, she first mounted the oaken case, and then the hollow stone embrasure, at the termination of which the casement was placed.

light

On

On her approach, she found her person too short for the wished-for view, and was despairing of the possibility of success, when the chair again occurred to her, and she with some difficulty dragged it within the narrow limits of the place, it was sufficient, she gained a view, gave a faint cry, and sunk upon the chair.

Agatha awoke at the sound, and, to her great astonishment, beheld Beatrice, whose singular monumental appearance half inclined her to smile; but when Beatrice found her mistress awake, excess of joy and frantic movements induced Agatha to be alarmed for her mental faculties.

She

She immediately arose, and learned from the delighted Beatrice, that she had gained a distinct view of the Castle of Beeston; but that from the density of the horn-work she could not discriminate objects.

Agatha immediately ordered her to descend, justly fearful of the interruption of Maud; for the moment Beatrice had replaced the chair, she entered to enquire concerning their noon-tide repast.

A glimpse of joy, for the first time for two moons, now beamed on the countenances of Agatha and her faithful attendant; and it was with infinite difficulty she could check  
the

the sanguine hopes and volatile observations of the elevated Beatrice.

“ Dreams are of no consequence  
“ to be sure, arn’t they.---I did not  
“ travel in the air for nothing though.  
“ ---Oh! I wish I could convince  
“ you.---Now Maud is gone, do let  
“ us get up, and pull out one of the  
“ horns that I may see my dear, dear  
“ master, and tell him how we have  
“ been used.---I’ll have De Peck-  
“ fort on hanged.---No, he shall be---  
“ I don’t know what he shall be done  
“ at---”

“ Before you sit in judgment,  
“ Beatrice, you should be out of  
“ the power of the accused. I am



" sorry to check your rising expecta-  
" tions; but---" here Maud entered,  
and her continued attendance de-  
prived them of the pleasure of further  
consultations.

---

**Chapter 15.**

---

O, take me in a fellow mourner with thee;  
I'll number groan for groan and tear for tear;  
And when the fountains of thy eyes are dry,  
Mine shall supply the stream, and weep for both.

ROWE.

---

**T**O return to that character, whose conduct in public gained him the confidence even of surrounding nations, whose private acts rendered him an example worthy of imitation to the king as the peasant, and whose name, from his virtues, was endeared to posterity.

His sturdy veterans viewed, with sorrow, their antient chieftain yielding to the force of affliction and disease, whom they had so often beheld oppose an host of powerful enemies with unvaried success.

As learning had not in this period darted its enlightening rays over the minds of men, their natural ferocity was sudden, and became ungovernable, when oppression was the subject of their vengeance.

Could the curses of the soldiery have prevailed, or their wishes been gratified, De Peckforton had been discovered, and bit the dust long before this time.

Randolph

Randolph regularly visited the spot from whence his beloved child was torn from him, unburthening his store of grief on that bench, which was formerly the seat of love and happiness.

One calm summer evening, in a deep reverie on his misfortunes, the Earl was disturbed by the sudden entrance of a peasant, who darting his right hand into his bosom, with the other flinging his cloak across his shoulders, cast a cautious glance, and was about to withdraw.

The Earl, struck by his manner and appearance, ordered him to remain---he seemed at first undetermined

mined whether or not to obey the Earl's mandate---but at length, with a submissive move, he acquiesced.

“ Whence proceeds your haste to depart from this place, which you entered with such precipitancy ?” inquired the Earl.

“ Fearful that your highness might be displeased at my trespassing on these grounds, appropriated for your own retirement.”

“ Beware, young man, of falsehood's path, pursuing which the mind becomes confused, errors overpower it, darkness makes the course a labyrinth---whilst truth, like the bright orb which to the world



“ world appears regularly rising, and  
“ as true going down, affords a  
“ blessing on whomsoever it shines.

The peasant's confusion increased.

The Earl became more interested,  
and expressed his intention of calling  
his attendants.

The peasant seemed hurt---“ My  
“ silence proceeds not from disre-  
“ spect, my lord ; the misfortunes and  
“ afflictions of our relatives, are sub-  
“ jects unpleasant for discussion.”

The Earl marvelled at the style  
and force of the observation, and  
regretted the harshness of his ex-  
pressions, knowing, that a brave and  
generous mind is ever averse to  
compulsatory

compulsatory measures, but that the mild powers of persuasion and conciliatory pity melt the heart to confidence and friendship.

“ If it is woe that oppresses you  
“ thus, you have arrived even at its  
“ seat; here (placing his hand on his  
bosom) “ here it reigns with all its  
“ warring powers---the morning mat-  
“ tin as the evening curfew finds  
“ deep-rooted sorrow in Randolph’s  
“ heart.---Age and disappointment  
“ may my temper sour, excuse a  
“ poor old man.”

The peasant fell upon his knees,  
bedewed the extended hand of Ran-  
dolph with tears, and thus began his  
narrative.

narrative. "My tale is short, for-  
"row never tells a lengthened story!

"My brother, a poor youth, by me-  
"lancholy madness sore oppressed,  
"wanders within these woods so long  
"and oft, I fear each hour that he  
"is absent may prove fatal, and in  
"my search I sought famed Ran-  
"dolph's shade, unwitting that it had  
"your royal presence."

"My pity thou excites---yet even  
"his madness would be joy to me,  
"could I but think my Agatha  
"existed."

A loud frantic laugh proceeded  
from the neighbouring thicket, and  
a tall, fair youth sprung, with the

agility of a deer, across the lawn--- before Randolph could recover his astonishment they were both out of sight.

A variety of conjectures occupied the mind of the Earl: a hunting horn brought his attendants, and he gave directions for a pursuit, ascending slowly the insulated rock.

---

**Chapter 16.**

---

O bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,  
From off the battlements of yonder tower;  
Or walk in thievish ways; or bid me lurk  
Where scorpions are; chain me with roaring  
bears;

Or shut me nightly in a charnel-house---  
Things that to hear them told have made me  
tremble;

Yet I will do it without fear or doubt,  
To live an unstain'd wife to my sweet love!

SHAKSPEARE.

---

**O**N the approach of evening,  
Agatha summoned all her resolution

T 2

to



to behold the objects which had last night so much alarmed her.

In her present mind she was resolved to speak to them, and, if mortal, to solicit their assistance in effecting her escape, or to protect her from the insults of the tyrant, should his passions lead him to violence.

Hour after hour the melancholy quarters passed in their solemn rotation, but no appearance of her nocturnal visitors, and the opening dawn again closed her heavy eyelids in the arms of sleep.

Agatha this day received a message requiring her answer to De Peckforton's note, which she had till  
now

now delayed to send, with an intention of protracting the period of this negociation, which rendered her confinement less liable to his intrusion.

The answer had not been remitted two hours before she received the following :

SIR HUGH DE PECKFORTON.

TO THE

LADY AGATHA.

“ When Lady Agatha had her  
“ liberty, and was under the pro-  
“ tection of her haughty parent, this  
“ treatment of Sir Hugh de Peck-  
“ fortton might, or must, have been  
“ by him endured.

“ Sir Hugh de Peckforton is in-

“ clined

“clined to think her ladyship had  
“forgot that her situation was re-  
“versed, when she penned a note so  
“proudly conceived.

“Lady Agatha will not be troubled  
“for her acquiescence, as Sir Hugh  
“de Peckforton’s nuptuals with her  
“ladyship is irrevocably fixed on  
“the sixth day from the date hereof.

“*Monday.*”

A stupor instantly seized her on  
perusing the conclusion of the note,  
and she sunk in the arms of her atten-  
dant, who became extremely loud  
in violent invectives, one minute la-  
menting the power of the tyrant, and  
the next defying his attempts.

Agatha’s

Agatha's usual spirits returned to her aid, when she again resolved to write to De Peckforton; and as a conciliatory style had not had the desired effect, she now wrote him the following:

LADY AGATHA

TO

SIR HUGH DE PECKFORTON.

“ Tyrant !---Agatha scorns thy  
“ power; her native honour and  
“ faith in heaven deride thy threats;  
“ and nought shall give to thee her  
“ person, but that which sends her  
“ soul to endless blifs.”

Thus did her noble mind lose  
its

its timid effeminacy by spurning at a cowardly tyranny; "but tis past," she cried, at the departure of the messenger, "I feel my courage fly. ---Oh Randolph! my dear and honored fire, thy daughter sinks beneath her weight of woe!--Beatrice, good Beatrice, how can we avert this blow? a cruel heart with power will ne'er relent."

Maud, as was customary at all these periods, made her appearance, and a dismal silence, similar to that which reigns in the solitary cell of the condemned criminal filled up the lengthened vacuum of this threatening day.

Agatha incessantly lamented the  
death



death of Rodolphus, often recalling to mind her solemn vow, and planning ideal schemes to indulge in that sorrow, should Heaven permit her to escape from the oppressor's power.

The night was far advanced, when Beatrice arose from her couch, impressed with the idea of making known her mistresses's situation from the window, which she had formerly discovered to be opposite to the Castle of Beeston.

For this purpose she took the vest of Agatha, which was richly wrought with burnished gold, a present from her sovereign on her first introduction at court, and which Beatrice had

carried with her to the grove on that fatal night, to preserve her mistress against the cold air.

This she thought to display through the casement; taking a piece of the horn work from the window, she hung the robe through, when it was forcibly drawn from her hand! Beatrice seated herself on the chair, and the certainty of a discovery of her intention nearly overcame her, supposing it was the night centinel who had taken it.

She remained lost in thought for some time, when she was roused from her reverie by perceiving that the lid of the chest was open, and the head

head of a male figure, clad in armour, with the beaver down, was proceeding from within it; all attempts to escape were impossible, as the rising of the lid had barracadoed the embrasure.

The scene here was beyond the power of a pen to describe, and nothing but the art of an ingenious painter could possibly express it.

She patiently resolved to await his return, not in the least doubting, that this supernatural appearance augured further mischief; but what was her astonishment, when she beheld him lay at the feet of Agatha, the very vest she had just lost; doing which he retired.

Beatrice after pausing, what she thought, a sufficient time for his departure, betook herself to her couch, and, with half fetched breathings, fancied every wind a ghost.

---

**Chapter 17.**

---

Unpunish'd vices here so much abound,  
All right and wrong, all order they confound;  
These are the giants who the gods defy,  
And mountains heap on mountains to the sky:  
Sees this th' Almighty Judge, or seeing spares,  
'And deems the race of man beneath his cares;  
He sees: and will at last rewards bestow,  
And punishments, not less assur'd for being slow.

JENYNS.

---

AGATHA awoke just as the returning light had so far dissipated Beatrice's fears as to enable her to enjoy her repose.

The



The first object which caught her attention was the embroidered vest, which Beatrice had neglected to replace; she mentally blamed her servant for her carelessness, and was about to refold it, when she discovered a scroll of paper, similar to that she had before seen exchanged between her nocturnal visitors; it was addressed to her, and run thus:



"Fair maid, enclos'd within these moisten'd walls,

"Thy fate, I fear, doth doom thee still to dwell;

"But when the tyrant to his bed thee calls,

"Be bold—obey not—all shall yet be well.

"Though

“ Though death, with threat’ning hand, his spear should  
“ hold,

“ Or deep damp prisons prove man’s future lot,

“ A female’s call would make e’en cowards bold,

“ And vengeance dart from throne or humble cot.

“ His wrath provoke not, or his murd’rous arm

“ May on thy beauteous frame its passion fate;

“ Nor offer thus thy parent to alarm,

“ By public tokens of thy dismal fate.”

Agatha perused these lines with amazement, conjecture, and enlivening hope. According to the request of her guardian angel (for such she deemed him) she secured the vest, resolved not to notice this event, to Beatrice, marvelling how it came there; but her resolution was unnecessary for Beatrice soon after awoke  
in

in great confusion, and hurried to the place where the vest had lain, with an intention of returning it to where she had taken it from.

“What seek you, Beatrice?” enquired Agatha, “can I assist you?”

“I only looked for a”---here she paused, supposing the ghost had returned for the vest, and, with uplifted hands, in her own mind charged him with robbery.

Upon Agatha observing, that she perceived there was something extraordinary appertaining to what she sought, Beatrice gave her a faithful detail of the events of the night, and concluded with hoping, Agatha would  
procure

procure the key of the chest, that they might not again be liable to the impertinent intrusion and wicked thefts of those men in iron; the sight of whom she never could endure since the night in the cell.

Agatha shuddered at the recollection, and for fear that Beatrice's timidity should induce her to divulge this secret for the purpose of possessing the key, read her the contents of the scroll she had received.

"But, in the name of wonder, how  
"could he get the vest? Oh, he is cer-  
"tainly a ghost, or he could never  
"have *lived* in the trunk." A name Be-  
atrice generally applied to the chest.

“Silence,” cried Agatha, “Maud is stirring, not a word, I beseech you Beatrice.”

Maud seemed of late to pay more respect to Agatha than she had ever done, which she attributed to the whispers she had heard on the intended union.

On her entrance she informed Agatha that it was her master's wish that her ladyship should have new robes suitable to her rank.

Agatha informed her that Sir Hugh's trouble was needless, as the sable weeds she then wore, fetching a deep sigh at the recollection, she was resolved never to change.

Maud



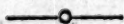
Maud observed, they would ill suit the joyous ceremony which was about to take place, and for which preparations were now making.

Without vouchsafing an answer, she ordered her to quit her presence, and Maud furlily obeyed.

Agatha possessed strong sense, marked by wonderful resolution; her mind, even in these periods, big with events, was often tranquil, easy, and collected: and, as the memory of Rodolphus called forth her sighs, so the afflictions of her father commanded her tears.

The faint hollow croakings of a new-fledged raven, perched upon the  
x 2                      embrasure

embrasure, resounded through the apartment;—Beatrice endeavoured, by her voice, to scare it, but in vain; its hoarse cry grated on the ear; Agatha requested Beatrice to be silent, and her mind being strongly impressed with the subject, she thus addressed it:



TO THE RAVEN.



Thou bird of omen! whose prophetic throat,  
Proclaims to man, in hoarse and lengthen'd note,  
The awful summons from misfortune's friend!\*

Welcome, oh! welcome, be thy solemn call,  
Reminding man, so heedless of his fall;  
May thy impressive augur rightly tend!

Thy

\* Death.

Thy nightly wings slow hov'ring round these tow'rs,  
Call forth reflection in our wakeful hours :  
Affail the base man's ear—he'll trembling shrink,  
Fly from the noise and dread the call of death,  
Gasping thro' fancied failure of his breath,  
And view perdition from the dreadful brink !

Not so the pious heart—he feels no pain,  
At falling low, who is to rise again !  
He views celestial bliss with anxious eye ;  
Lifts at thy boding with an humble hope,  
Nor longer with disease will deign to cope,  
But calls on God, and boldly dares to die !

---

Chapter 18.

---

How quickly was the tide of fury turn'd  
To soft compassion and relentless tears.

LEE

---

IN the course of the night, the pursuers returned with the youth who had formerly held the conversation with Randolph.

The Earl, on the morrow, being seated in the hall of audience, ordered the suspected peasant to be brought before him.

He entered with a firm, steady step,  
and

and bowed thrice to the Earl; his complexion was swarthy, yet his countenance was engaging.

The Earl desired him to acknowledge who he was, from whence he came, and the cause of his flight from his presence.

“ Sorry should I be that Octavian  
“ gave offence to so great and good  
“ a prince as Randolph. Born in a  
“ foreign clime, my lineage British,  
“ to England, with my brother, fire,  
“ I came, to seek relief from those  
“ wise Cambrian bards, whose fame  
“ in science spreads to foreign climes:  
“ within the precincts of the neigh-  
“ bouring



“bouring hamlet, have we, ’till now,  
“sojourned.” (he suddenly became  
much affected) “Now from my  
“brothertorn, whose furious steps by  
“fancied foes pursued, may meet a  
“fatal end, whilst I, his sole pro-  
“tector, thus enthralled, cannot  
“assistance give.”

The Earl dropped a tear of sympathy, his stern enquiring countenance assumed a degree of placid serenity, and he again resolved to give the peasant his liberty, although curiosity would have induced him to investigate the cause of the grief of his captive, still his generous nature spurned the idea of inquiring  
into

into those circumstances, which might enhance his affliction.

“There appears a singularity in  
“your conduct,” observed the Earl,  
addressing the youth, “which sur-  
“prizes me, and at the same time  
“distresses me; I forbid you relat-  
“ing events which may perhaps  
“injure yourself, and be of no im-  
“port to me: go, young man, may  
“prudence and virtue be your  
“guide, and may all-powerful Hea-  
“ven recall your unfortunate rela-  
“tive to the powers of reason---yet,  
“mayhap, if misfortune has over-  
“come him, this lapse of time may be  
“the happiest of his existence---but

“ the suggestion is somewhat wrong;  
“ man should endeavour by reli-  
“ gion to stem the torrent of worldly  
“ misery : You are at liberty, youth,”  
he paused---“ there is a something in  
“ your countenance which bespeaks  
“ a good disposition, I hope I mis-  
“ take you not.”

The tears of affection rolled down  
his manly face.

“ My honour, sire, forbids what  
“ gratitude would grant, a mystery  
“ over my actions lower, which could  
“ they give but Randolph happiness,  
“ each secret of my soul would I  
“ reveal---even my life resign.”

Randolph embraced him, and of-  
fered

ferred attendants to seek his brother; which offer he handsomely declined, alledging, that such company might strengthen his misconceptions.

The youth departed upon his fraternal search, and the Earl calmly contemplated on the misery attendant on this transitory life; neither youth nor age are exempt from its troubles, and those riches which are by vain mortals esteemed productive of every good, are here ineffectual, proving often a source of calamity.

A few hours after the departure of the youth, one of the attendants brought him a casket, containing a

few pieces of foreign gold coin, and  
the following stanzas :

—o—

O'er the moss-grown dell I sing my song;  
In plaintive notes, the shades among;  
But when my brain to madness yields,  
I seek the wild, and flow'ry fields:  
'Midst briars and thorns my bleeding footsteps trace,  
The shepherds shun my weather-beaten face.

O'er hedges fly—then gutters wide  
My wand'ring fancy dares to chide;  
When in the midst, in water cold,  
By one false step, I'm headlong roll'd:  
The hoary icicles my temples bind,  
And nature decorates me to my mind:

'Tis cold without, within 'tis hot;  
Ah! through my veins the poison shot;  
For           has bid the world good night,  
And bloody       has spit his murd'rous spite.



The mutilated state of the manuscript rendered it scarce legible, and the principal subjects of the poem were erased, seemingly with great care. That it was the produce of a mind deranged there could be no doubt; and the Earl was much distressed that the youth should, in haste, have forgot his treasure.

As Randolph was returning these trifles within the casket, his hand caught a gold miniature, which was suspended by the side of it. What was his astonishment when he beheld a portrait of his long lost Agatha, which he had once given her. Rage,  
doubt,

doubt, and disappointment choaked all utterance, and, for some minutes, he had not sufficient strength to call his attendants; who were, to their great surprize, commanded to retake the peasant, dead or alive, as the ravisher of his daughter.

An uncertainty on the mind bent upon a discovery, in which its dearest interests are involved, is far more harrassing than any cause which oppresses it. Randolph measured his apartments with hasty steps, to and fro. To the casement he then repaired, which commanded an extensive prospect; his aching eyes rapidly

pidly flew over each spot of ground not hid by the numerous woods with which the country abounded.

By the side of the stream of Osley he thought he perceived a youth contemplating its spontaneous flowings. He instantly called an attendant, thinking his visual faculties not sufficiently strong to ascertain his hope; the man confirmed his belief, and fled, with precipitance, in search of him.

The distance of the Osley waters was something more than a mile from the foot of the rock, and its pellucid stream was seen in various directions from the castle, amidst breaks in the surrounding woods.

The

The Earl now observed him move towards the brink of the stream, and instantly plunge in the glistening tide!

A faint cry issued from Randolph's lips, his horror and anxiety became inexpressible—the idea of a fellow-creature being hurled into futurity, to escape from his pursuit, caused his limbs to shake with the agitation of hope and expectancy, and his pious soul prayed for his preservation.

END OF VOLUME I.

W12.2

**Castle of Beeston,**

OR,

**RANDOLPH, EARL OF CHESTER.**

AN

**HISTORICAL ROMANCE.**

Fabrics must moulder e'en as Mortals die;  
But Virtuous Deeds defy the Pow'r of Time,  
And shine resplendent in eternal Fame!

**THE SECOND VOLUME.**

**LONDON:**

**PRINTED FOR R. FAULDER,**

**NEW BOND-STREET.**

**1798.**



Charles of Normandy

RANNOCH, EARL OF CHRIST

HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

London most noble's son of Scotland this;  
The Venerable Brevity the flow of time,  
And thus significant in eternal time!

THE SECOND VOLUME.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR R. HARRISON,

NEW BOND-STREET.

1793.

# CASTLE OF BEESTON.

## Chapter 19.

His bandag'd brow the roses sweet entwine;  
Or lovely jonquil, or sweet jessamine,  
In drooping sadness, to the desert air,

Waste their perfume, and seem his woes to share.

DE Peckforton was resolved, and, in his own mind, secure of obtaining the hand of Agatha; now in his power, surrounded by his myrmidons, trained up with their leader

to every act of brutal violence, her refusals he treated with contempt.

Should she resist his honorable offers, he resolved to accomplish the wicked bent of his inclinations, even if the next moment he plunged her into eternity.

His visits at the Castle of Beeston were now less frequent than formerly; but, when he did go, his hypocritical powers shone in their full lustre.---With the good Randolph's, he mixed the crocodile's tears; no heart more void of religion---no tongue more fluent in its admiration---no mind more black in its designs---no words more pure in  
their

their tendency---it was villainy, equally diabolical, which alone could have a chance of detecting his depravity and hypocrisy. Who then more unlikely than Randolph?

To guile a stranger, and to virtue prone,  
He deem'd all men, all minds e'en like his own.

De Peckforton's parents left the world as their son arrived at maturity. Possessed of a vigorous constitution, a large income, and uncontrollable influence over his numerous vassals, something might be adduced for the irregularities of his youth, by the temptations he was exposed to, and flattering depend-

ants; but these juvenile follies, when found in full manhood become vices of that nature, which prove the heart of the possessor tainted by inherent depravity.

The youthful mind, like virgin wax, is prone,  
Each good or bad impression still to own;  
But when to rectitude the heart's inclin'd,  
The vicious course soon fatiates the mind;  
Then godlike reason bears enlight'ning sway,  
Then guilt we shun, and honor's voice obey.

When the power of the partial  
invigorating cup had left its insup-  
portable lassitude, on the mental as  
well as bodily system of De Peck-  
forton; this tyrant over Agatha's  
liberty and happiness sought relief  
from



from the heat of the intoxicating juice, by a walk in the shady grove beneath the hill. He arrived at the stream of Osley at the moment the young peasant, who was deranged, had made his escape from the merciless stream, and, with a melancholy smile, stood shivering on the bank.

De Peckforton started.

"Hift! not a word! nor let Osvian know!" exclaimed the youth,  
"All generous souls are secret!--"  
"nay, as for that, a murderer and  
"despoiler knows his cue!"

"Ah! dost thou know me?" suddenly spoke De Peckforton.

"Dost think the robin 'neath the  
"hawthorn

“hawthorn bush cannot discern the  
“towering eagle’s flight, and tremble  
“at the talons, though so distant?---  
“I’ll buz a little tale within thine ear;  
“a female mouse, of white unspotted  
“beauty, beneath the mow in happy  
“love she lived with her attentive  
“fable mate; even then I watched  
“them in their amorous play; when  
“lo! a motley monster, a cat  
“ycleped, sprung on her dingy  
“lover’s back, and with marauding  
“jaws cracked his impotent bones;  
“when ’neath his claws the beaute-  
“ous snow-white little one extended  
“lay, and died with very grief; the  
“savage monster gazed, then glory-  
“ing

"ing in the prize, with one fell  
"swallow took the fair one down.---  
"Oh! how I wept!"

De Peckforton beheld him with a  
suspicious horror---his dark eye glif-  
tened with rage at the allusion his  
madness bore;---his brawny hands  
clenched, and his posture bespoke  
a violent attack on the youth, when  
even his rough soul was softened by  
the fascinating melody of his voice  
in the following

## STANZAS:

"Sweet innocence, a lovely maid,  
"So gladfome thro' the forest stray'd;  
"Her beauteous bosom would you know,  
" 'Twas clear as frost, 'twas pure as snow;  
"Her

" Her smile angelic charm'd the mild ;

" See nature's gift, see nature's child.

" Ah! beauteous maid! ah, whither fly?

" With anxious care, I loudly cry,

" A wolf within the forest lurks—

" But more of this anon; my  
" reed's untuned, and with its creak-  
" ing cracks thine ear. Dost see  
" the lonely castle's heights? there  
" virtue lives 'neath sorrows lower-  
" ing cloud; but dost thou mark  
" the turrets on yon neighbouring  
" hill? There Lucifer his court up-  
" holds, and murder stalks undaunted  
" 'neath its roof--buz on De Peck-  
" fort's fame."

" Impostor! to my Castle thou  
" shalt

“ shalt go; De Peckforton will pu-  
“ nish thy presumption!”

“ Art thou the prowling beast  
“ then of the forest?” tauntingly  
observed the peasant, “ I know thee  
“ now, and glory in the interview.  
“ Wretch of barbarity! Earl Ran-  
“ dolph’s bane and curse! thy mur-  
“ derous eyes hath sent Rodolphus  
“ hence; struck from the list of life  
“ his precious gem.”

He here grappled with De Peck-  
forton, and his puny strength lorded  
over the tyrant’s wonted power.

“ Restore the treasure, void of  
“ which the riches of the east are  
“ baubles.---Thy blasted soul shall  
“ live



TO CASTLE OF BEESTON.

“live”---half turning from him,  
stretching forth his hands and arms in  
token of abhorrence---“live in daily  
“tortures to thy hell-formed mind,”  
---here convulsive laughter shook his  
frame, “now could I curse with glee,  
“curse e’en myself and chuckle with  
“the thought! Ah! beauteous dove,  
“this laugh but ill accords!”

Contrary passions now influenced  
him, and in his madness he wept.

De Peckforton was rendered im-  
moveable with astonishment, when  
the peasant darting at him again,  
laid him prostrate.

“Live, live, De Peckforton, even  
“as thou liest, groveling, live.

Having

Having spoke these expressive words, so allusive to the tyrant's situation, he fled into the woods, leaving him possessor of the field.

---

**Chapter 20.**

---

—See, the king reddens,  
The fear which seized him at Alphonso's sight  
Is vanish'd now ;  
And a new tide returns upon his cheeks,  
And rage and vengeance sparkle in his eyes.

DRYDEN.

---

**R**AGE, fear, and insatiable revenge  
accompanied De Peckforton to his  
mansion. Passions boding no good  
to the innocent inmates of his prison.

He offered large sums of money  
for the apprehension of the peasant.

His

His face glowed with the fire of wrath, when he uttered his anathemas against the unfortunate youth, and an universal dread prevailed over the menial instruments of his vindictive rage; who, with the fury of blood-hounds, obeyed his exasperated orders.

He then called Hubert; but his rage was so violent for some time as to render his conversation incoherent; at length he exclaimed, in extreme agitation, "To be upbraided by  
"a base-born peasant---scorned---  
"struck to the earth, unresisting, by  
"a boy!----curfed infatuation!----

"to

“to be thus affected by a maniaæ!

“---Oh! Hubert! Hubert! my

“head’s distracted!--my heart tor-

“tured! all things conspire to thwart

“my happiness!”

“Sir Hugh de Peckforton has

“happiness within his power,” ob-

served Hubert, “had he courage

“to grasp it.”

“Courage, caitiff!--dost doubt

“me? the man can’t shew who

“dares with me to cope?---but

“words, and words of bitterness,

“subdue my soul, and all my cou-

“rage turns to gaping weakness.---

“Rather the soldier’s sword within

“my



“my breast than those upbraidings  
“which reflection brings.”

“Marry, my lord, proud Randolph’s daughter---the deed being  
“done, no force can it recall.---The  
“Earl, you know, once favoured  
“much your union.”

“Hubert, thou’rt right---’tis done:”  
and after some consideration, he penned the following note to Agatha:---

SIR HUGH DE PECKFORTON.

TO THE

LADY AGATHA.

“An event which Sir Hugh de  
“Peckforton foresaw not, renders  
“it expedient that the nuptials  
“between

“ between him, and the Lady Aga-  
“ tha, take place on the night of the  
“ morrow.

“ The fiat is irrevocable; Sir  
“ Hugh de Peckforton scorns that  
“ delay, which marks indifference to  
“ the hand he offers, and which the  
“ daughter of a king might with  
“ pride and joy accept.”

Agatha wept on the perusal of  
this note, and wished that either a  
more humble birth, or a less degree  
of beauty, had been her portion.

Beatrice cheered her by recalling  
the promise of the ghost, in whose  
power her mistress placed more con-  
fidence than she could do. The  
accumulating

accumulating insults which Agatha experienced endowed her with greater strength of mind, being convinced that her safety now depended entirely upon her resolution and perseverance; she therefore, with the spirit of an heroine, resolved to encounter this formidable attack, the event of which, with true Christian hope, she entrusted in the hands of a Superior Power.

Agatha this night anxiously looked for her unknown friend to appear, as so much depended on her communicating to him the tyrant's resolution; she therefore wrote the fol-

lowing address to be ready against  
his appearance:

“ The singularity of your appear-  
“ ance alarms me; your mysterious  
“ conduct calls forth my doubts; yet  
“ my fears, together with my unpro-  
“ tected situation, induce me to sue  
“ for your assistance.

“ Difficulties increase---the period  
“ of my grief approacheth fast, and,  
“ unless you extend your hand to  
“ my aid, on the ensuing night, Earl  
“ Randolph's daughter sinks in end-  
“ less wretchedness.

“ Let female woe claim your pity.  
“ If at liberty, fly to my wretched  
“ parent---

“parent---tell him his Agatha’s fate  
“is this instant pending---tell him  
“De Peckforton has deceived him,  
“under the most sacred tye of friend-  
“ship, by basely robbing him of his  
“greatest treasure; and, without  
“speedy succour, his darling daugh-  
“ter is sacrificed at the shrine of  
“voluptuous tyranny---Haste! let  
“virtuous misery call forth your  
“manly powers, and may Heaven  
“prosper your exertions.”



---

## Chapter 21.

---

A weeping willow o'er the limpid stream,  
Yields to each gentle breeze which wafts its  
boughs,

And o'er the minds of passing rambles casts  
Allusive sorrow from its drooping sides.

But when the storm, with boist'rous winds, assail,  
Its creaking trunk deplores its per'lous state,  
And ever and anon its rising boughs,  
By sudden gusts, emerges from the flood,  
And drops its tears amidst the angry waves!

B.

---

THIS affecting representation of  
her own misfortunes she folded, and  
endeavoured

endeavoured to slide between the crevice of the chest, but so close was it formed that the attempt was vain. After much consultation, Beatrice got a large knife, and introduced it close to the lid, which immediately opened, and the letter was taken through.

Beatrice screamed violently, and Maud immediately peeped cautiously, holding fast by the door, insisting upon knowing the cause of their alarm.

Beatrice, ever ready upon these occasions, said, "she'd shriek when she pleased, and if their confinement lasted much longer, her last  
"groan

"groan she believed would be heard."

"Render yourself contented," retorts Maud, "you'll not stop here long; and though, mayhap, you may have seen the ghost now, he'll not trouble you again; for he only comes occasionally our Hubert says."

"A ghost!" cried Agatha, with precipitance: Beatrice placed herself upon the chest, with a significant nod of the head, and Maud proceeded:

"Surely, they say, a good man was murdered here---'tis very odd; but my master never comes here!"

"Never

"Never comes here," again enquired Agatha eagerly.

"No, never; and I think he's quite right, for I don't like it myself, I assure you; for Hubert says he's a monstrous big ghost, and very ugly."

"Was he ever so beautiful," observed Beatrice, "I should never admire him. Lord! I dare say it's our dear Robert, your savage brother murdered!"

Agatha was here obliged to interfere, as the disputants began to shew symptoms of ungovernable rage; and it was with some difficulty she could convince Beatrice she was wrong.

wrong in alledging a crime, the commission of which she could not prove, and Beatrice unwillingly apologized.

Situated as Agatha was, every doubtful suggestion conveyed misery to her sensitive mind; should this indeed be only a vision, against a man of the savage ferocity of De Peckforton it would avail little.---

His daily crimes avowed his denial of the influence of the Supreme Being; and wickedness is too often prone to reject the existence of that power, from whom rewards and punishments proceed.



---

Chapter 22.

---

E'er since reflection beam'd her light upon me,  
You, sir, have been my study. I have plac'd  
Before mine eyes, in ev'ry light of life,  
The father and the king.

MALLET.

---

THE momentous day now arrived  
which was to determine the destiny  
of our unfortunate heroine; could  
the beauty of the hemisphere portend  
the will of fate, Agatha had every  
happy omen.

The

The rising sun dispelled the morning mist, and the feathered chanters chirped their early mattins, when Agatha, with a timid voice, called Beatrice.

“ My dreams are strange, so wonderful, and so uncommon, I cannot say they’re good or bad, and yet”--- In this jargon of conjecture Beatrice continued for some time.

“ Good Beatrice, check these wanderings, let realities in the time of danger alone occupy your attention. Oh! my Rodolphus! if thy dear spirit hovers o’er our misery, if ’tis permitted human woes to influence, extend thy hand to thy  
expiring

“ expiring Agatha; teach me by heavenly wisdom enlightened, to foil  
“ the snares contrived by wicked  
“ man; let me in shades celestial, of  
“ suicide but void, enjoy the bliss  
“ of innocence and thee, and, Oh!  
“ my father!” She paused, her bosom  
beat with a ardent wish to behold  
Randolph perhaps for the last time.

She ascended the embrasure with  
trembling steps, and there beheld the  
place of her nativity---the residence  
of her afflicted parent, whose affection,  
care, and wisdom ever contributed  
so much to her happiness.---

Alas! now fled, perhaps for ever.

The

The tears occasioned by the prospect before her, for some time overcame her, when, at length, she exclaimed, “ Wretched Agatha! “ how unlimited are thy miseries! “ for the soothing voice of affection and persuasion, I experience “ the harsh commands of arbitrary “ power; and that liberty, which an “ enlightened mind looks to, the narrow space of this prison circumscribes;---great Heaven! the vow “ of my heart! my Rodolphus! “ agonizing thought! too powerful “ for human reason to endure.”

She then raised her heavy eyes in  
mental

mental devotion, when, as if Heaven vouchsafed the gratification, she beheld her parent amidst his soldiery. His once upright form sinking beneath the burden of affliction, now sought support from a lofty staff, which though it added to his dignity, struck the soul of Agatha with grief; she wept piteously---amidst her tears she thought she perceived his face directed towards her---his features seemed disturbed by sudden anger---his frown to Agatha was awful---His attendants in a body parted from him, proceeding to the extremity of the lower gate-way, and he retired to the upper ward.

Her



Her heart palpitated with a dread of the cause of his rage---and half-wishing she had not this addition to her doubts and fears, left the window with disappointment.\*

The uncertainty how the events of this night might terminate, induced her to write the following lines; which on the approach of the evening she resolved to scatter through the window:

“ Whoe’er thou art to whom these lines have flown,

“ If that thy bosom glows with virtue’s fire,

“ Lift to the sorrows of sad pity’s lyre,

“ And to Earl Randolph, give his daughter’s moan.

“ De

\* Randolph was at this time commanding his soldiery to pursue the peasant.

- " De Peckforton assumes tyrannic power,  
" And 'neath the castle's dome within this hour,  
" Agatha sacrifices to his rage  
" And brutal passions, virtue can't assuage.  
  
" Tell him his daughter died with honor blest'd?  
" And ne'er disgrac'd her sire's illustrious name!  
" She sinks a victim by sad horrors press'd,  
" To rise a martyr to her virgin fame!"

---

## Chapter 23.

---

The two firm rocks on which all friendships stand,  
Are love of freedom and our country's glory;  
Piety, valour, and paternal love  
Form the arising pile; the other virtues,  
Candor, beneficence, and moral trust,  
Are superstructures and adorn the dome.

HOWARD'S REGULUS.

---

THE soldiery whom Randolph had sent to save the youth from the water in which he had emerged, arrived at the moment De Peckforton had left the wood.

“ This

"This is a slippery eel the Earl  
"feels," observed one of them.

"Yes, he seems to have taken the  
"water like a fish too," answered  
another, "but by the moisture of  
"the bank, this amphibious creature  
"now has closed his gills on the  
"land."

"My lord seemed much agitated,  
"and mentioned the lady Agatha."

"The lady Agatha!" they all  
cried; at that instant they beheld  
the youth proceeding through the  
wicket to the wood beneath the castle.

A shout for pursuit alarmed him,  
and he flew amidst the trees, fol-  
lowed by the soldiery in full chace.

They soon lost sight of him; but his footsteps were traced on the dewy grafs to the grove of Agatha. They were here, if the expreffion may be allowed, at a fault; and, after a fruitless examination of the adjacent woods returned to the caſtle without the object of their purſuit.

The Earl expreſſed much diſatisfaction at the failure of their expedition, ordering them to attend his perſon, and he would himſelf ſeek him.

The ſound of trumpets now re-echoed round the lofty rock, which announced the coming of a royal meſſenger: Randolph relinquished



quished the pursuit, and loyally prepared to receive the mandates of his king and master, in the hall of audience.

The hope of some tidings of his daughter revived, and a transient tinge of health beamed over his emaciated cheek, forming a striking contrast to his snow-white hair, which reclined on his shoulders.

Lord Audley was the messenger, who, kneeling at the feet of Randolph, thus addressed him:

“To Randolph, famed Chester’s  
“Earl, Henry of England wisheth  
“health, with happiness, and wills  
“his servant this packet to deliver.”

“Canst thou to Randolph’s ear  
“some comfort bring? Ought canst  
“thou tell of her so long I’ve sought?”

“Would that I could, my Lord!”

“Enough!---long has my heart  
“each joy on earth relinquished!”  
exclaimed Randolph, with a sigh---  
“How fares our Lord and King,  
“good Audley?”

“He is well, my lord.”

Audley seemed much affected at  
the Earl’s grief; and Randolph  
broke the seal of the packet, which  
ordered him to repair to Rhydland  
Castle, in North Wales, to take the  
command; that garrison being threat-  
ened to be besieged by the Welsh.

His

His age and afflictions induced him to decline this honour offered by his sovereign; but the address, penned by the king himself, and the sentiments it breathed, rendered it irresistible.

HENRY OF ENGLAND

TO

RANDOLPH, GREETING.

*Beloved Cousin,*

“ As all efforts to restore peace to  
“ thy wounded bosom have hitherto  
“ proved ineffectual, our affection  
“ and gratitude for thy former ser-  
“ vices, would induce us to dissipate  
“ that gloom, by engaging thy atten-  
“ tion

“tion to pursuits thy mind ever en-  
“tered into with emulative ardour:  
“and by and with the advice of our  
“councils, we and they, being fully  
“convinced of the success of our  
“arms, when led by a veteran so  
“famed both for courage and vir-  
“tue; thus, rather entreat than com-  
“mand thy assistance and counte-  
“nance in quelling the turbulent spi-  
“rits of our Cambrian foes.”

HENRICUS REX, III.

*From Our Court at Westminster.*

The soldiery flew with rapture to  
obey the mandate, anxious again to  
display their valour under the glori-  
ous banner of the Earl of Chester.

The



The energy of Englishmen g'owed in their bosoms---Unity reigned in their hearts---and success followed their footsteps.---Generous enthusiasm! may its influence never be banished from the minds of Britons!

The pursuit after the peasant was given over. Randolph was now inclined to think that the miniature might have been lost by Agatha in the confusion of her capture, and that the peasant had found it amidst the woods.

The clamour of distributing the shields and ponderous armour, resounded to the neighbouring hills.

The herald proclaimed the call  
for



for the soldiery, tenantry, and vassals through the country.

Sir Hugh de Peckforton was also summoned, but his interest with the Earl got him appointed Governor of the Castle of Beeston during his absence, artfully insinuating, that anxiety for the welfare of Randolph, and grief for the loss of Agatha, induced him rather to remain in his service in the castle than join in this expedition: His personal bravery never being doubted, but often proved, the Earl acquiesced with his request.

This regulation was absolutely necessary for the accomplishment of  
De

De Peckforton's designs on the daughter of the too credulous Earl; and the fate of war might remove the chief obstacle to his public espousal of Agatha.

When vice once occupies the human mind, no crime, however dreadful, can impede its course in the accomplishment of a wished-for gratification.

---

**Chapter 24.**

---

The neighbouring plain with arms is cover'd o'er;  
The vale an iron harvest seems to yield  
Of thick-sprung lances in a waving field;  
The polish'd steel gleams terribly from far,  
And ev'ry moment nearer shews the war.

DRYDEN,

---

**T**HE ensuing morning Randolph proceeded with all his retinue and forces to his palace at Chester, where a numerous host attended to conduct him to the Castle of Rhyl and.

He arrived within its walls when  
the

the army of the enemy just appeared at the further extent of the lengthened marsh; and they were then informed of his arrival with his auxiliaries at the castle.

A furious assault was meditated that evening, in hopes that the troops would be so much fatigued with their long mountainous march as to be nearly incapable of duty. But they had to contend with valiant heroes, whose fame and martial prowess descended to their progeny, inducing succeeding monarchs to select a chosen band of Cheshire men to attend their own persons in the field of battle.

Notwithstanding

Notwithstanding the toil they had endured, a desperate sally was made upon the besiegers by the garrison, and the marsh of Rhydland did again, as in the Saxon times, witness the defeat of the ancient Britons.

The sea ebbcd and flowcd, unconscious of the bloody stream which tinged its shores---the peaceful possessors of the mountains fled at the warlike tumult around them---and nought but exasperated man, beheld this scene without dismay.

The enemy, after several severe conflicts, in which many heroic men were slain, found their efforts fruitless, and that nothing could subdue  
men



men so brave, but famine; therefore a close and watchful blockade took place, and every avenue to the castle was filled with the surrounding foe.

Randolph finding that famine was their intention, privately dispatched a courier to Chester, requiring instant succours to prevent the surrender of the castle.

It has often been lamented that the human race should be liable to the convulsions of war; but the same hand that bestows blessings, can inflict grievances; the punishments of Heaven are given by the sword, but its rewards flow from the pure fountain of peace and happiness.

At

At the time the courier entered the City of Chester, mirth reigned uncontrouled within her walls; her gates were opened wide to receive an immense influx of strangers from all parts; and the jocund dance and songs of the inhabitants resounded to the minstrel's pipe and plaintive harp.

It was the fair, instituted by the first Earl Hugh Lupus, during which, he entertained his faithful subjects.

This spacious hall was honored with the attendance of all the neighbouring nobility and gentry, together with a numerous band of yeomanry and tenantry, and which Randolph was

was wont to honour with his presence.

Minstrels, and all persons who contributed towards the mirthful moment, came in concourse to this festival; amidst the rest, our unfortunate peasant, whose wavering passions, now high, now low, led him to harangue the populace at the high crosses: When the messenger entered the city, and seeing a crowd assembled, took this opportunity of announcing his errand.

The peasant seemed inspired by the danger of the Earl--his expressive eye darted reason--his face glowed with the energy of his mind--  
when,

when, placing himself in the most striking attitude, he thus addressed the populace :

“ Randolph inthraled! a prisoner,  
“ Chester’s Earl! forbid it, Heaven!  
“ if one bright spark of Cestria’s an-  
“ cient valour in every bosom burns,  
“ adopt my council, though not wise,  
“ expedient it may be. To arms!  
“ to arms! be whatsoever they may,  
“ some weapon of offensive nature  
“ bring; bring too your lutes and  
“ harps! let great recording time  
“ enrol your names in her eternal  
“ list: That Cestrians, in the midst  
“ of mirth and joy, flew, at a mo-  
“ ment’s call, to aid their chief, and  
“ save

“ save his fame from numerous foes  
“ fell mockery! joining the battle  
“ with a jocund song.”

His speech, action, and subject fired the people, whose numbers amounted to some thousands; instantly was his plan approved---the rolling Dee witnessed the passing band approach the borders of their neighbouring foe---and the ensuing morning, by break of day, brought them within sight of the enemy.

This warlike host, marching down the hills, struck the Welsh with dismay, and they made a precipitate retreat to the Castle of Conway.



Randolph, with astonishment, beheld the motley croud; learning the occasion of their expedition from the chief magistrate who had accompanied them; he ordered the peasant who had been the cause of their marching to be brought before him; but he was missing, and could not be found.

The Earl's wonder was increased; when, from the description of the youth, he became impressed with the idea that it must have been one of those who had so afflicted him at the Castle of Beeston; yet he was now so far gratified, as to be convinced this

this youth must be too much his friend to have injured him in so material a point as the captivity of his daughter; and the piteous circumstance of his madness, together with a strong sense of the services he had rendered his soldiery, by preserving those from famine whom he loved as his life, caused an anxious wish in the breast of Randolph not only to alleviate his misfortune, but to redress his wrongs: Still, after every exertion of inquiry, no tidings could be gained of the rout he had pursued. The Earl was grievously disappointed.

Pity it is that disappointment should harrafs the generous and worthy heart, but that each virtuous wish should be gratified as soon as conceived.

---

**Chapter 25.**

---

His person huge, yet not unfitly form'd:  
His features, roughen'd by mild beauty's bane,  
Seem'd to conspire to stamp his look terrific;  
A prominent brow hung o'er his jet black eyes,  
Like to th' impending rock which 'bove the lake,  
In threat'ning form its dingy shadow casts,  
Rend'ring the glist'ning fluid dark and dismal.

B.

---

BY a sudden darkness, Agatha perceived a storm had superceded the beautiful serenity of the azure sky; the wind in lengthened murmurs seemed

seemed to circle round the turrets ---the big drops of the scattered rain and hail beat against the horn-worked casement---the season of winter approached, and this, one of its harbingers.

Agatha was roused from her reverie by Maud requesting the attendance of Beatrice in the anti-chamber; Beatrice obeyed, and Agatha again was left to her contemplation, when the cries of her handmaid assailed her ears; she immediately flew to her assistance, and beheld the savage Hubert dragging her to the pannel, which was open.

Beatrice,



Beatrice, on the appearance of her mistress, seized the dagger from his belt, and Agatha commanded him to desist---when the vacuum of the pannel was filled by the person of De Peckforton!

Agatha screamed with horror, and a silence of some minutes prevailed. After viewing her some time with a supercilious hauteur, he desired an audience in her chamber. She at first refused his insolent demand, but perceiving his choler rising, and his big chest heave with passion, she thought it prudent to consent, conditionally, that her servant should be present at the interview.

He

He ordered Hubert and Maud to retire without the pannel, whose closure sounded terror to the ears of Agatha.

With heavy footsteps, solemnly and slow, he followed the trembling victim of his unrestrained passions into her chamber.

Agatha seated herself on one side the chest, De Peckforton took the other, and Beatrice slid to the distant corner of the apartment.

Beatrice sighed and groaned unnoticed by her mistress or the knight, whose attentions were absorbed in their different feelings on this occasion.

“Am

“Am I to address Lady Agatha  
“as the future bride of De Peck-  
“forton?”

“Never!” groaned Agatha.

“Curse on the word, which to  
“my recollection calls the night I  
“heard it uttered!” exclaimed Sir  
Hugh.

“’Twas then De Peckforton who  
“vilely crept to listen to my pa-  
“rent’s offers! but could I doubt  
“it? What act so mean, what deed  
“so base, that this fell monster  
“would not dare to do.”

“Ah! and dost thou to my face  
“then loath me?—Learn, ’twas  
“I, when sheltered by the shade  
“of

“ of evening and thick foliage  
“ of the trees, planted by thy ac-  
“ cursed lover, heard thee thy so-  
“ lemn vow to heaven make, which  
“ I this night will blast!---’Twas I  
“ who murdered thy Rodolphus;  
“ these very hands, when midst the  
“ battle’s loud confusion, action  
“ close, turned Saracen, and slew  
“ the man I hated!---Hear this, great  
“ dame; more, much more, could I  
“ relate.---De Peckforton will live  
“ on yonder towers when Randolph’s  
“ hoary head, beneath the pompous  
“ pile, in Cestria’s walls, is solemnly  
“ entombed.”

Agatha’s tears rolled down her  
cheeks

cheeks at the cruel allusion, while De Peckforton exclaimed :---

“ Within the anti-chamber, wretch,  
“ retire,” to Beatrice, “ and if a  
“ breath forth from those lips es-  
“ cape, that breath this sword shall  
“ prove to be thy last.”

“ And am I doomed this hour to  
“ close my eyes for ever? Shall  
“ Randolph, Chester’s royal Earl,  
“ lose his poor only lamb, and by  
“ a butcher’s knife?”

“ No!---Agatha, when he thou  
“ terms thy butcher breaks thy spi-  
“ rit, then shalt thou live in misera-  
“ ble splendour, by serving him who  
“ hath thee in his power!”



---

## Chapter 26.

---

As well the noble savage of the field  
Might tamely couple with the fearful ewe;  
Tygers engender with the fearful deer;  
Wild muddy boars defile the cleanly ermine;  
Or vultures fort with doves; as I with thee.

LEE.

---

THE clock struck one!--De Peckforton started, as if a sudden recollection of some other incident crossed his mind. Agatha viewed him with dread---the wind roared loudly

loudly amidst the stillness---his brawny limbs tottered, and he seemed immoveable---Agatha perceived Beatrice standing at the door of the chamber.

“Tis past!” he cried, “the hour  
“is gone---he comes not---blessed  
“shade! who thus hath sanctioned  
“my proceedings---’twas all I feared  
“---for hadst thou frowned!---Now,  
“lady fair, De Peckforton will cull  
“those sweets Rodolphus would  
“have revelled in.”

He approached Agatha, who shrieked, and had nearly fainted, when a sudden thought chilled her with horror; soon her resolution returned

returned with redoubled force, and she thus addressed De Peckforton:

“ Villain, stand off!---thy powers  
“ impotent are!---thy deeds so foul,  
“ sure in the eye of heaven, no  
“ greater crimes De Peckforton can  
“ perpetrate.---But let Randolph’s  
“ vengeance serve to check thy rage.  
“ ---Recall his virtues to thy vicious  
“ soul, and let them act like purify-  
“ ing fire to dissipate thy grossness.---  
“ Oh, let Rodolphus’ bleeding corse  
“ appal thy sight; let future punish-  
“ ment its dread enforce; and, last  
“ of all, though foreign to thy breast,  
“ let pity lend its softening powers.  
“ ---Oh, mercy, Heaven!”

“ ’Tis

"'Tis vain! that heart thou  
"chargest with the foulest crimes  
"shall glory in this act, if, even, 'tis  
"the last!"

"Be it the last!" cry'd Beatrice,  
flying from the door, and plunging the  
dagger she had taken from Hubert  
into his side---the lid of the chest rose  
---the figure in armour sprung upon  
De Peckforton---Agatha fainted!---

"Wretch!" exclaimed the figure,  
"may thy crimes this moment cease  
"for ever!"

"Ah! and doth thou then exist,  
"or is it justice supernatural that  
"arms thee thus?---accursed fight!  
"that blasts my full-fledged hopes  
"in

"in endless tortures: Oh! name  
"I tortures!--through my fiery  
"veins a cold and freezing damp  
"creeps even to my heart---Oh!  
"damned blow, and from a woman  
"too! may hell"---

A dark and cunning cast of his countenance, formed for consummate deception, led the figure who appeared to suspect the wound was not so powerful as his feelings seemed to denote---therefore, after binding him to the chest, in a solemn voice he thus addressed him:---

"Speak not, De Peckforton, but  
"as thou may'st have time to make  
"thy peace with heaven---thy life I  
"give



“ give thee; but to the minds of  
“ men whom virtue know, a life like  
“ thine, loaded with crimes and mur-  
“ der, would be a gift ungratefully  
“ accepted!—Come, lovely maid,”  
opening the part of the arras from  
whence the female had before ap-  
peared, “ within you’ll find a fellow-  
“ sufferer.—Should Heaven vouch-  
“ safe to let thee still exist, (turning  
to De Peckforton) search for a spot  
“ sequestered far from man—call to  
“ thy God to lend his healing aid to  
“ allay thy restless soul; and when  
“ thy hour is come, may penitence  
“ atone for crimes untold!”

They then entered through another sliding pannel into a room adjoining, leaving De Peckforton groaning with the agony of rage, pain, and disappointment.

---

**Chapter 27.**

---

The ways of Heaven are dark and intricate,  
Puzzled in mazes and perplex'd in errors;  
Our understanding traces them in vain:  
Lost and bewildered in the fruitless search;  
Nor sees with how much art the windings run,  
Nor where the regular confusion ends.

ADDISON.

---

AGATHA was led from her  
abode to the chamber adjoining.---  
She there beheld the beautiful Elea-  
nora, whom Beatrice immediately  
recognized.

Her preserver was the youth Octavian, who ordered strict silence, or their escape would be frustrated.

---Pilgrims garbs were procured for Agatha and Eleanora, whilst Beatrice sought disguise under a minstrel's cloak.

After having bound the old woman, considering that De Peckforton's remaining so long in the chamber would alarm the inhabitants of the hall, so as to cause a speedy search, they proceeded through the same vaults they had been so much alarmed in on their first entrance.---Beatrice seemed to have forgot her fears in passing the coffins, and a  
few

few minutes brought them at the termination of the passage.

Octavian now dreaded a discovery from the centinels on the ramparts, who would have commanded, had it been day-light, a full view of the place.

That the escape of Agatha and Eleanora might be certain, he entreated them to go first, fearful that their footsteps, jointly, might alarm; and he would keep at such a distance, as to be able to guard them against the enemy, should they discover their intent.

With trembling steps and slow,  
they



they proceeded through the wood, and arrived within a short distance of the village of Beeston, when they were alarmed by a number of people proceeding from a cottage, with a tumultuous kind of mirth.

Octavian flew to the refugees, and ordered them not to proceed---Beatrice, in her fright, lost sight of them, and found herself in the midst of the noisy peasantry.

“Hey-day, who have we here?---

“As I live, a minstrel” cried an old man, “come in again, though

“all our youngsters are gone to the

“war, my lasses shall report, that

“the

"the old men have made them  
"merry---come, friend, play us Sir  
"Roger de Calveley."

Beatrice trembled, and hid her  
face with her cowl, observing, "She  
"had lost her instrument."

"O you're a pretty minstrel for-  
"sooth, come here without your  
"tools;" said the old man, "but if  
"you have forgot your joy, I have  
"mine," bringing a cup of ale,  
"come you shall drink success to  
"Earl Randolph and the Welsh  
"expedition---and confusion to the  
"rascal who stole his good daugh-  
"ter."

"Huzza,"

"Huzza," they all cried.

"With all my heart," exclaimed Beatrice cheerfully, having done which she smiled, bade him a good repose, and joined Octavian, who advanced towards her when he perceived she had left the company.

Octavian, from this, finding, that the Earl had departed from the castle that morning, thought it most prudent to seek ecclesiastical sanctuary, as the domestics of the Castle of Beeston might not be in force sufficient to repel the attacks of De Peckforton, should he attempt it; to the Monastery of Bunbury they

they therefore repaired, and were received by the good Lady Abbess with rapture and delight.

She deemed it most prudent for their arrival to be kept secret until the Earl's return, particularly as De Peckforton had now gained possession of the castle.

Veils, as noviciates, were procured for the females, and they occupied the rooms of the Lady Abbess.

---

**Chapter 28.**

---

When gratitude o'erflows the swelling heart,  
And breathes in free and uncorrupted praise  
For benefits receiv'd: Propitious Heaven  
Takes such acknowledgment as fragrant incense,  
And doubles all its blessings.

LYLLO.

---

THE ensuing morning Agatha and Eleanora were seated in their apartment with Beatrice, and after obtaining a particular account of the preceding events from Agatha, Eleanora



anora requested to clear the mystery which appertained to many parts of it, by reciting her own melancholy narration.

“ Sir Hugh de Peckforton is my  
“ brother!”

“ Your brother!” exclaimed Agatha, with astonishment; when over the pale countenance of Eleanora a lovely suffusion spread---her beautiful dark eyes became surcharged with tears, and she reclined her hands and head on the back of her chair; when Agatha, hurt at the effect of her sudden surprize, took the hand of Eleanora to her lips, and besought her, in the soothing  
voice

voice of friendship, to pardon her indiscretion.

“Pardon! my dear Agatha,” cried Eleanora, “name it not I entreat you; this is not the first time Eleanora has blushed for her confanguinity to Sir Hugh de Peckforton!—O Lady Agatha! he has proved the cause of every woe I have yet known.

“My mother, blessed saint, when she departed, my happiness for ever took its flight.—I was left in the power of De Peckforton, whose rough soul was ill-formed for sisterly intercourse, and whose passions led him so much astray as  
“to

“ to render his mansion an improper  
“ place for my residence.

“ Sisterly feelings sought for some  
“ comfort it is true, yet, my expect-  
“ tations were not exalted.

“ Many, even then, were the suf-  
“ ferings I endured from his arbi-  
“ trary authority; but none de-  
“ pressed my mind more than his  
“ positive interdiction against my  
“ ever entering the gates of the  
“ Castle of Beeston.

“ From the character fame had  
“ reported the Lady Agatha, a fe-  
“ male forlorn and friendless, would  
“ have been blessed by that inter-  
“ course, which the contiguity of  
“ our

“ our residences might have afforded: but my solicitations ever  
“ strengthened his obstinacy, and  
“ my acquiescence to his will was  
“ my punishment.

“ A few moons after my mother’s  
“ decease I was sent abroad; when  
“ my young heart first owned Octavian:---the various events which  
“ my affection might dwell upon  
“ would be irksome; suffice, I  
“ returned to England; Octavian  
“ followed, resolved to sue for my  
“ hand from my brother---but, ah!  
“ the application had nearly proved  
“ fatal to us both.

“ De Peckforton’s expences had  
“ exceeded

“exceeded his income; certain that  
“my portion would be demanded  
“on my marriage, he with-held his  
“consent, and immediately confined  
“me, fearful that an elopement  
“might be the consequence of his  
“refusal.

“Few in the castle knew so well  
“the private avenues which lead to  
“it as myself; from this circum-  
“stance I contrived to get De  
“Peckforton’s key of the vault  
“under your room, which was  
“then the place of my confine-  
“ment, as there was a trap-door  
“into the chest by which he might  
“gain admiffion.

“This



“ This vault was that through  
“ which you passed where the cof-  
“ fins lay.---De Peckforton one  
“ evening surprized us: Octavian  
“ was defenceless, and my wretched  
“ brother wounded him with his  
“ sword.---I fainted, and my bro-  
“ ther fled.

“ On my recovery, with rapture;  
“ we perceived it was but slight---  
“ my faithful attendant, (of whom  
“ I was afterwards deprived, when  
“ De Peckforton discovered she had  
“ permitted me to visit you on  
“ your first entrance of your dis-  
“ mal prison,) dressed the wound,  
“ and assisted him to escape, in-  
“ forming

“forming De Peckforton she had  
“flung the body into one of the  
“vaults below.”

“But how could Octavian exist  
“in this receptacle of the dead?”  
inquired Agatha.

“His stay here was always short.”

“I’m sure mine should have been  
“so,” interrupted Beatrice, “could  
“I have got out.”

“The shade of night alone en-  
“abled him to elude the watchful-  
“ness of the centinels in his stated  
“visits to me.”

“The night you were brought to  
“the castle, De Peckforton entered  
“to examine these rooms for your  
VOL. II.                      G                      reception,

“reception, at the hour that Octavian had appointed to meet me.

“I concluded this rencounter would at last be fatal, and, with a degree of horror awaited for the event.

“The hour came that was to bring my lover to the apartment--- I heard De Peckforton start, and, after a short period, quit the place with precipitancy.---I immediately appeared, and found Octavian enjoying the gratification of having alarmed De Peckforton and the assassin Hubert, with their misconceiving his appearance for a ghost.

“We

“ We could have escaped before,  
“ it is true, but resolved that your  
“ fate and ours should be in-  
“ parable.”

“ Generous friends! how much  
“ am I indebted to you,” observed  
Agatha, “ how will my father re-  
“ ward you for such a singular in-  
“ stance of compassionate humanity.”

“ Situated as we were, sensible  
“ of the horrors attendant upon the  
“ place, every trait of goodness  
“ and compassion must have been  
“ eradicated from our bosoms had  
“ we forsaken you; and, from a  
“ knowledge of my brother’s spirit,  
“ the hour that Randolph fought

“his daughter would have inevitably been her last. It was for this reason Octavian drew the veil from Beatrice through the aperture in the vault below, fearful it should lead to the discovery we apprehended.”

Agatha embraced Eleanora, and acknowledged her obligations with tears of gratitude, speaking more than volumes: for the mind capable of conferring an obligation, seeks not for the noisy fluency of words, but feels in the heart both the sense of gratitude and the mutual feelings of humanity and delight.



---

**Chapter 29.**

---

With woeful measures, wan despair,

Low, fullen sound, his grief beguil'd;

A solemn, strange, and mingled air:

'Twas sad by fits, by starts 'twas wild.

COLLINS.

---

BEHOLD the countenance of the lovely Agatha beaming in all its wonted beauty; content her power imparts; innocence, preserved from misery's abyfs, rejoices; and to her

her God she offers her grateful thanks.

The garden now wore the marks of winter, destructive to the fragrant beauties of nature; and the falling leaf reminded unheedful man of the shortness of his abode here.

Agatha and Eleanora, after so long a confinement, even in this late season, enjoyed its walks, and roved with pleasure through its evergreens, which, in nature, retained their full-leaved beauty.

The sun darted its resplendent beams, and the trembling dew dazzled upon the drooping leaf, waved by the gentle noon-tide breeze, which

which played amongst the branches; when the rambles were about to enter an hermitage beneath a solitary shade, erected by the Lady Abbess for her retirement, when the duties of her profession permitted.

They were here met at the door by Octavian; Agatha started, and Eleanora rejoiced, not having seen him since the momentous night--- they would have proceeded under the thatched roof, but, with earnestness, he entreated them to return.

A beautiful grove led them within its bower.

“ Whence have you strayed

“ Octavian?”

"Octavian?" inquired Eleanora,  
"Lady Agatha and I have married at your absence."

"It is a nunnery perhaps that has affrighted you;" with a faint smile, observed Agatha, "but if the Castle of De Peckforton could command his voluntary presence, the Monastery of Bunbury, Eleanora, could never deprive us of that pleasure."

Octavian bowed and seemed confused, Eleanora soon caught the infection, and Agatha reflected on her lamented Rodolphus.

They were roused from their reverie by footsteps in the neighbouring

bouring grove, and a powerful, impressive voice sung the following pathetic stanzas; his notes were wild and irregular, but their force and beauty were aided by musical judgment:

Ah! whither art thou gone my love?

Ah! whither art thou fled?

Thy faithful lover round doth rove,

By madness rudely led.

Octavian seemed disturbed: Eleonora would have fought the songster, but her lover again requested her to refrain.

Agatha's heart beat with unusual sensations, for the voice vibrated in her ears, and she aloud inquired  
of



of Octavian if he knew from whence  
it came; when it again resumed:

Hark! 'midst the woods her voice I hear,

Melodious even now;

Come, saint ethereal, madness cheer,

I have not broke my vow.

“ Good God!” exclaimed Agatha,  
“ the person's derang'd.”

Again! again! Oh, reason! gentle power!

The dismal mist which o'er my senses lower,

Disperse! disperse! let light its influence dart,

And drive my madness from my aching heart.

The softness and chasteness of his  
recitative was here delightful.

Octavian hastily departed in search  
of the youth we have before-named,  
Agatha and Eleanora remained a  
considerable

considerable time expecting his return---when the Lady Abbess appeared, to whom they eagerly told the recent occurrence.

“ Ah! poor youth, I know him”---

“ Know him!” interrupted Agatha.

“ For some weeks past my hermitage was his residence.---It should ever be religion’s care to comfort misfortune---nor should the duties of our church be confined only to its walls---the master we follow inculcated a contempt in his disciples for the self of life, any further than it could tend to the promotion of religion, virtue, and happiness.

“ Devil ”

“ Meditating

“Meditating on the ease and  
“content of a monastic life,” (the  
Lady Abbess was too much enlight-  
ened for bigotry) “I was disturbed  
“by the sudden entrance of a youth-  
“ful peasant, who closed the door,  
“and seated himself at the table,  
“before he perceived I was with  
“him; he would then have with-  
“drawn---I was alarmed, perceiving  
“which, he returned, and gave me  
“so piteous a look as to affect me  
“to tears---he seemed pleased with  
“my sensibility, told me an incohe-  
“rent tale, marked strongly by af-  
“fliction, madness, and method.

“I then inquired where he  
“lived?

"lived?---Here! every where! was  
"his answer."

"How numerous are the ills at-  
"tendant on life;" observed Agatha,  
with a sigh.

"True, my daughter," replied  
the Lady Abbess, "but what hap-  
"pens is it to us who have the  
"power of relieving them---I imme-  
"diately gave orders for accomo-  
"dating the youth in the hermitage,  
"which he occupied till within this  
"fortnight; when his absence had  
"alarmed me for his safety."

Their conversation was inter-  
rupted by the appearance of a monk  
of the priory hobbling down the  
avenue,

avenue, who, on his approach, informed the Lady Abbess of the arrival of two females of consequence: she hastened to receive them; whilst Agatha and Eleanora slowly proceeded to their apartment.



---

## Chapter 30.

---

— Thus was beauty sent from heav'n;  
The lovely miniftrers of truth and good,  
In this dark world: for truth and good are one,  
And beauty dwells in them, and they in her,  
With like participation.

AKENSIDE.

---

ON Agatha and Eleanora being  
seated by the side of the glowing  
hearth, which the autumnal night  
breezes now rendered cheerful, the  
Lady Abbess entered, and her placid

cid countenance was covered with a faint flush, seemingly excited by pleasure and surprize.

Agatha took her hand, and half-breathed, " My father."

Influenced by similar ideas, Eleonora clasped the other, and would have said, " Octavian."

" Neither," retorted the Lady Abbess, significantly.

Something like a frown covered the cheeks of each, but it was a cloud which their natural good-humour instantly dispersed, and, with joy, Agatha learned, that the visitors at the abbey were Ladies Maynwaring and Delamere.

lip

The

The Lady Abbess introduced them immediately---joy and astonishment nearly overcame them---the name of Agatha and Randolph alternately escaped their lips---The power of happiness on the mind is equalled only by its contrary passions: Agatha shed tears of momentary joy; she pressed her friends to her bosom, and an impressive silence prevailed for some time; their eyes only spoke the sentiments of their hearts; to an intelligent mind, a source of intercourse refined and delightful.

The Lady Abbess then gave her visitors a particular detail of the mis-

fortunes, and the nature of Agatha's confinement, justly dreading the recovery of De Peckforton, whose rancour and revenge would carry him beyond all bounds, should he discover her retreat before the Earl returned.

She afterwards related to Agatha the circumstances attending the visit of Sir Robert le Grosvenor and Sir Philip de Egerton, whose kindness claimed her acknowledgments to their friends, and excited horror at the hypocrisy of De Peckforton; but love for Eleanora induced her to change the conversation, by observing, that it reminded her of events which

which ever must cause disagreeable sensations.

The tear glistened thanks from the eyes of Eleanora; and the Lady Abbess informed Agatha, her kinswomen influenced by their affection, sought her approbation of their nuptials on the return of their knights from the war, should Heaven permit it. She congratulated them on their happiness, with difficulty repelling the rising sigh; again recalling the promised similar happiness in her union with Rodolphus.

Eleanora instantly repayed the debt of gratitude; "Permit me, " Lady Agatha, to have the honour



"of being introduced to your  
" friends."

"Permit me that honour also,"  
exclaimed Octavian, precipitately  
entering the room; perceiving stran-  
gers, he was about to retire, when  
Eleanora involuntarily caught him  
by the arm; the Lady Abbess, with  
a pleasant mischievousness, intro-  
duced them jointly; the blush of  
Eleanora betrayed her confusion;  
which Emma and Isabella noticed  
by a good-humoured smile.

A conversation, truly interesting,  
on the vicissitudes of life, afterwards  
occurred; the females displayed  
their knowledge with a timidity  
pleasing

pleasing and convincing; Octavian felt delighted, his eyes wandered with pleasure to each object who spoke, and scarcely could he decide to which the wreath belonged.

Female conversation, though held in contempt by heathen philosophers, is justly admired by the moderns, and though the general subjects of discourse among women do not strengthen the judgment of men, still they serve as a delightful stimulative to sharpen the wit, and dissipate the dross attending deep study.

The enthusiasm and rapture of Octavian is easily accounted for; the hours, days, and months he had spent

spent in anxious solitude and hazardous enterprize, protecting the prisoners of De Peckforton, were now delightfully contrasted with the attainment of his pursuits in their safety and society; yet, often would the heavy sigh escape his lips, to the dismay of Eleanora and the pity of Agatha; often too would curiosity, said to be predominant in the sex, attempt an inquiry into the cause, but in vain; something like a solemn interdiction proceeded from his countenance, and a conversation, of this tendency, often deprived them of his company.

It was now resolved by Ladies  
Emma

Emma and Isabella, to remain in the abbey until the Earl of Chester returned from Rhydland, no account of whom had been received for a long time.

---

**Chapter 31.**

---

Rest, gentle youth! while on the quiv'ring breeze,  
Slides to thine ear this softly breathing strain;  
Sounds that move smoother than the steps of ease,  
And pour oblivion in the ear of pain.

LANGHORNE.

---

FOR a long time the reports concerning De Peckforton were various; at length a monk came from his castle to the monastery to order requiems to be sung for his eternal peace!

Agatha



Agatha felt relieved, yet shocked; Eleanora shed a tear, lamenting his untimely end, and unfortunate disposition; when they were alarmed by a sudden scream from Beatrice.

“Dead! mercy on me! who  
“killed him? was it me? Oh, God!  
“what will become of me? I shall  
“never sleep again! indeed, indeed,  
“I shan’t! but he deserved it, and  
“to be sure if I had not killed him,  
“he’d have killed me, and my dear  
“mistress, so I’d rather kill him;  
“but should he haunt me!—

Agatha was a long time reasoning with her before she could pacify her, and was at length obliged to declare,

declare, he must have died of a fever, not from any injury received from her.

Beatrice's anxious wish to believe this for her own quiet operated, affecting a content which her doubts often interrupted.

Agatha retired to her apartment, with Beatrice, who soon forgot her fears in sleep. The hour of midnight approached, when her ear was struck by the deep-toned organ accompanying the choir in the requiems to the soul of an inveterate enemy.

Her generous heart beat, her soul was struck with a degree of horror at the recollection of the crimes of  
the

the deceased; she mentally prayed for a propitiation of his sins, but it was not enough, hastily taking her veil, with a generous enthusiasm, proceeding from the calm forgiveness of injuries, ever attendant on pure religion, she, with trembling steps, left her apartment for the choir of the abbey.

On her entrance the organ stopped, and its loud notes played on the echo; the partial lights glimmered in the vaulted isles, and she proceeded to a retired seat, occupied occasionally by the Lady Abbess.

Her knees took their recumbent posture,

posture, when the requiem again commenced; she listened, and silently joined in their devotions; her God occupied her soul---for her enemy she interceded---and her spirit seemed inspired with the noble greatness of her devotions.---The loud organ ceased, and the monks retired from the chapel unnoticed by the beneficent devotee; nought remaining but a solitary friar, with a night-torch, repeating Pater-nosters for the deceased.

Agatha was about to return, when she perceived the figure of a man proceed towards the monk, and lean his head upon a ponderous  
crook

crook which he held in his hand; the monk started as he placed the heavy wood at his feet, which resounded through the chapel.

Agatha felt interested, yet alarmed; and could discern, by the dull light of the torch, that it was a youth habited like a pilgrim.

“Whence is the silence of the night infringed upon by discord?” wildly, but emphatically, inquired the youth.

“’Tis a requiem for the peace of a departed knight;” replied the friar.

“And wouldst thou then for all men requiems sing? will church-  
men



“men sell those dues God wont receive, and cheat e’en sinners dead?  
“---A truce, man, with thy prayers,  
“let me be knowing whether the  
“soul is worth the saving; least by  
“attempting, friar, to save his soul,  
“thy own eternal welfare might be  
“risked.”

The friar had not recovered his astonishment.

“I ask’d thee, friend, for whom  
“thou prayed?” he inquired, somewhat softened.

With a faltering voice the priest answered, “A neighbouring chief,  
“Sir Hugh de Peckforton.”

“De Peckforton!” he cried, with  
a voice

a voice of thunder, which made the roof to ring---then dashed the branch which supported him against a pedestal with a vase of holy water---the monk stood aghast---Agatha faintly shrieked---and nought was heard, but the water trickling from the broken vase.

A stupor of surprize possessed the youth---he tottered to the seat beside the friar.

After a considerable pause, he exclaimed with melancholy, "Dost  
"mock me, monk?"

The father of the church answered, "No; I'd fain relieve thee."

"Indeed, thy calling's good---but  
"doth

"doth not reach the cause: My  
"mind's oppressed---I know not how  
"nor why. What didst thou say?"

"Postpone the question; let us  
"now to prayers; religion, be thy  
"grief of worldly kind, will ease  
"the heart and give the mind con-  
"tent."

"'Tis well---thy counsel's good---  
"good priest---music accords with  
"melancholy more than dull mono-  
"tonizing prayers in lengthened  
"periods: One leaves the mind un-  
"limited scope to rove; whilst hea-  
"venly tones absorb his very soul,  
"and lull each agonizing grief to  
"rest!"

He

He then ascended to the organ, and instantly commenced the Te Deum---the hollow bass voice of the monk accompanied the fine tenor of the youth---and Agatha recognized the captivating powers of the unhappy wanderer.

The solemnity of the hour, the fright she had experienced, together with the force and nature of the concert, overcame her exhausted spirits, and she fainted.

---

## Chapter 32.

---

As one who spies a serpent in his way,  
Glistening and basking in the summer ray,  
Disorder'd stops, to shun the danger near,  
Then walks with faintness on, and looks with  
fear.

PARNELL.

---

WHEN Agatha recovered, the large bell of the monastery struck two---an impenetrable darkness prevailed---and it was not till after some consideration



consideration that she could recollect the circumstances that had occurred, or where she then was.

The receptacle of the dead in the solemn hour of night, strikes awe in the imagination of the boldest: to return through the mazes of the cloisters to her own apartment was impracticable, therefore she resolutely determined to spend the remainder of the night in her present situation---her mind meditated on the different calamities that had befallen her so early in life, and, with pious submission, she blessed the hand that chastened her; implicitly and wisely yielding, with-

but a murmur, to the dispensations of providence.

Her contemplation was disturbed by the sound of distant confused voices; she listened attentively with a degree of anxiety, but it ceased--and she attributed this to the force of imagination in the dead silence that reigned, or the passing of the winds through the long aisles.

Agatha now composed herself patiently to await the coming of the morning, when she fancied she heard a footstep in the body of the choir--the caution with which it trod, alarmed her--she raised herself from her seat in the vain hope

of discerning it---when the noise then proceeded from whence she had first heard it.

It came nearer---she now distinguished the sound of footsteps advancing towards the entrance of her hiding-place---her heart panted with fear, when they deposited something against the door; happily she had taken the precaution to bar it, or it must have given way.

A shrill, soft whistle caused the footsteps she had before heard to move---the sound of her own name surprized her---she was about to open the door, thinking her friends sought

fought her, when one of them exclaimed, "Here is Sir Hugh!" and instantly they all began to depart.

A female voice then struck her ear, but they were so far advanced as to render it impossible to discriminate.

Her fears rendered her insensible for some time---the drawing of her breath caused even an alarm of discovery.

She was lost in conjecture---was Sir Hugh de Peckforton still alive? too sure his deep hypocrisy might render even his death doubtful.

Too credulous Agatha! thy fate allots

allots thee further troubles---the measure of thy misfortunes is not yet filled.

“I am betrayed” she mentally exclaimed, “even in sanctuary betrayed---my heart yearns for death  
“---Oh, my father! my father! my  
“miseries are insupportable---my  
“fiat is irrevocable---no friend now  
“left; all base and venal---even  
“the ministers of Heaven deceive  
“me---Where! Oh, where! shall I  
“fly for safety?” She here wept abundantly.

The morning now began to dawn, and the calls of the birds were heard in the midst of the chapel.

A robin



A robin soon after perched above the seat where she sat, and poured forth his morning song in melancholy cadence. Agatha still wept---the bird came nearer---his little breast panted with the power of his song---the hour of mattins arrived---the priest she had seen the night before entered, accompanied by a man in a black cloak; they looked around with extreme caution ere they conversed: Agatha's curiosity was excited---she perceived them proceeding near the seat where she sat---again her fear was roused---she resolved to listen to their conversation.

“Your

"Your blunder is unpardonable," angrily observed the monk, "my directions must have been accurate, had you been mindful---what says Sir Hugh?"

"He's mad with rage and disappointment, and swears vengeance against you!"

Agatha thought she knew the voice---was resolved, if possible, to see his face.

"Against me!" rejoined the monk, "his malice is impotent---he has imposed upon our holy church in her most sacred rights---I have revenge within my power he knows."

"'Tis

" 'Tis true father; and yet we  
" must not thwart him."

" We wont Hubert."

The horror Agatha conceived at the name of Hubert is easily imagined---and what plan to adopt for her future safety she knew not;---the integrity of the Lady Abbess could not be doubted, but her power was confined---the return of her father from the wars was now reported to be uncertain. Octavian had hitherto opposed any steps being taken to inform him of her situation---lost in conjecture, she resolved to occupy her seat until the Lady Abbess retired from her devotions.

" Hubert!"

"Hubert!" faintly had Agatha exclaimed.

"Hark!" cried Hubert, turning quickly round, "did you not hear my name?"

"Fool, weak fool," observed the monk, with a smile, "'twas thy echo  
"only; ghosts and phantasies af-  
"fright thee, Hubert."

"Never but once," observed Hubert with a sigh; "and then!"---

"Hift!" interrupted the monk;  
"Cease thy childish tales---the hour  
"of prayer is come---I must pre-  
"pare for my devotions."---Hubert  
retired.

---

**Chapter 33.**

---

Oh! my heart pants, and every nerve is shaken;  
Upon my forehead sits a damp like death:  
My blood runs cold; I feel the channel freeze,  
Scarce will my trembling limbs support my  
weight;  
But shake like cowards on a day of battle.

LANSDOWNE.

---

**T**HE monks of the monastery now entered; the organ's pipes swelled, and the ceremony of the morning was commenced by the treacherous friar.

The



The Lady Abbess appeared in her public situation, attended by the sisterhood---the neat simplicity of her dress added consequence to her venerable appearance---the nature of her calling seemed to influence her every action---the nuns looked to her with filial affection; her attention to their happiness compensated for their confinement, and her example rendered the monastic life so respectable as to scorn the efforts of polluting calumny, bane of all society, formed in the womb of vulgarity, and nurtured in the lap of ignorance and envy.

Agatha viewed her countenance  
with

with an inquiring eagerness, but it betrayed no emotion, except that which sprung from the energy of her soul in the duties of her religion.

The whole convent being engaged at prayer she took this opportunity of retiring unnoticed to her apartment.

The events of the morning again lead us to the chapel.

The monk attempted to hurry through the service---his mind seemed perturbed and agitated.

In the midst of a solemn invocation, a loud noise proceeded from the aisle, and the pilgrim appeared at the altar---the monk trembled, and the service ceased.

The

The attention of the assembly was directed towards the youth---his chest heaved seemingly with rage---he placed his foot on the stool on which the priests kneel near the altar, and his hand supported him on the table---his expressive eye turned towards heaven, and, for a few moments, he seemed in convulsive meditation.

The monk roused himself, and resumed the service.

“Cease, thou monster of iniquity!” he hastily and solemnly exclaimed, “fear the lightnings of Omnipotence---dread the venging  
“arm

“arm of heaven! nor thus provoke  
“thy God by mockery and insult.”

The monk leaned his head on the  
reading-desk; confusion and astonish-  
ment possessed his auditors.

The Lady Abbess approached  
the youth, who, in a tremulous  
voice, thus addressed her:

“Thy eye proclaims beneficence  
“and virtue---no lurking darkness  
“gleams from 'neath thy veil---but  
“view his cowl,” quickly turning  
towards the monk; “see dread hy-  
“pocrisy approach---an hypocrite  
“'gainst heaven.---Well may the  
“sheep go astray when wolves are  
“shepherds.

"shepherds---Arise, and go with  
"me! I'll be thy keeper! pamper  
"and keep thee well from doing  
"evil---follow I say!"

The monk added to the astonishment of all present, by leaving his desk, and preparing to attend the youth.

An awful silence prevailed---he then majestically descended down the steps of the altar, and the monk seemed insensibly to follow him through the door of the cloister.

The Lady Abbess stood with astonishment---not a word proceeded from any quarter---the ceremony of the church was at an end; and, in



the course of some time, the congregation began to retire to contemplate and conjecture on the strange events of the morning.

The method which accompanies madness, or a certain species of mental derangement, accounts for the strong and expressive language of the youth; the impulse of conscious depravity overcame the wonted powers of the monk, and scarce knowing why or where he went, the fear of a discovery to the fraternity, induced him to obey his imperious mandates.

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**Chapter 34.**

---

- - - - - What so sweet,  
So beautiful on earth, and, ah! so rare,  
As kindred love,

YOUNG.

---

ON Agatha entering her apartment she discovered every thing in the greatest confusion. The couch, on which Beatrice had slept, was dragged to the centre of the room; different articles of her dress strewed over the floor, and spots

of blood had stained several of them.

On sight of the blood she shrieked, and instantly sought the rooms of her friends: she was met by Eleanora, and fainted in her arms; Emma and Isabella assisted her to their couch, and, for a considerable time, found all restoratives fruitless.

The Lady Abbess, on leaving the chapel, had repaired to her apartment—the confusion she beheld struck her with horror, and precipitately she entered the chamber the moment they had placed Agatha on the couch.

Seeing

Seeing her, even in this state, was happiness compared to what she suffered in the apprehension of her being taken from her---the natural villainy of man occurred to her-- she was now safe, no exertion of hers should be wanting to render her still so. She was about to seek the Superior, it was the monk that retired with the peasant; in his absence she was supreme---closing the gates of the convent, she took possession of the keys from the porter, secured each avenue, and then attended upon the unfortunate refugee.

Agatha, on her recovery, related what

what had passed---they shuddered at her danger, and returned thanks for her providential escape; immediately concluding that Beatrice had been taken for her mistress---that the monk was the instrument of De Peckforton's machinations, and that the tyrant still existed---the conduct and intention of the peasant was a mystery they could not unravel, and instantly was Octavian's assistance and advice deemed necessary.

Where to find him Eleanora herself knew not, he having no certain residence---open to the revenge of De Peckforton, from a supposition  
of



of his death, more than ever; Eleanora became impressed by fear, estimating his existence as that of her own; she resolved to seek him, and endeavour to preserve him from the hands of her inveterate brother.

When the pure passion of love reigns in the female breast, how amiable is its sincerity, its anxiety and affections; with what elevated joy the object beholds the various instances of regard, and gratefully acknowledges them with reciprocal kindness.

With tears Eleanora solicited the Lady Abbess to permit her to leave the convent in search of Octavian.

She

She deemed the scheme too hazardous, yet felt for her afflictions, and, after some consideration, assented to her leaving it, appointing a female of the monastery in whom she placed confidence sufficient to intrust Eleonora to her care.

The pilgrim's habits, which favored her escape with Agatha from De Peckforton, again answered a similar purpose; this night was fixed for her departure; and, with pleasure, she beheld the moon's full orb in a clear, resplendent sky.

The Lady Abbess attended them to a small wicket at the end of the garden of the monastery; the beauty  
of

of the evening would have led her further, but the situation of Agatha demanded every caution; she gave an affectionate benediction on Eleanora, and retired.

Eleanora felt her heart beat as the door of the convent closed; Heaven only knew should she ever enter it more---to Heaven she intrusted her cause, and proceeded on her journey, not knowing the rout she pursued until she found herself near the village of Beeston.

The noise of the centinels, from the lower ward of the castle, roused her from her reverie; she was alarmed, and for some time irresolute.

lute how to act; she rather hastily proceeded, and passed beneath the steep part of the rock.

Her attendant respectfully hinted the danger of discovery, and requested her to retire in the wood.

The wood in which Agatha had passed so many happy hours, and in which all her misfortunes commenced.

Eleanora took the advice of her attendant, kind and expedient---they passed through the shade to the seat of Agatha and Rodolphus.

Eleanora knew it not for such, but the picturesque beauty of the place must strike the eyes of taste.

Blessed

Blessed mortals! who enjoy not the luxury of discrimination; the beauties and bounty of nature are, to the mind of apathy, as the barren sand of the wilderness.

She felt fatigued with her walk, and seated herself upon the bench, lost in admiration at the scene around her.

Her attendant observed, by the light of the moon, a man proceeding through the wood; they instantly retired to the coppice behind the seat, he approached cautiously--- then parting with care the entwined boughs opposite the seat, he disappeared



peared just as Eleanora was about to exclaim "Octavian!"

Leaning on her attendant, she impatiently cried, "He's gone---we'll follow;" adding, with a sigh, "with caution."

The frequent absence of Octavian---his close silence on that subject---his melancholy-- all for a moment conspired and arose in the breast of Eleanora in the hideous form of jealousy; but it was a momentary impression, and too gross an inmate for so generous a heart; still something impelled her to follow---it was love.

After

After passing the shrubs, she perceived herself at the entrance of a cave, and heard distinctly the sound of voices. A female's struck her ear---with difficulty she supported herself by the arm of her attendant---the door rudely formed of rough hewn wood was closed---a sudden light glimmered through its crevices---she resolved to behold its inhabitants.

With extreme caution she proceeded; to express her emotion of surprize and pleasure was impossible.

By the side of a few embers lately lighted sat Beatrice, busily employed in preparing a scanty repast;

Octavian

Octavian reclined on a small quantity of straw opposite to Beatrice; and, at the further end of the cave, to the astonishment of Eleanora, she beheld the friar of the monastery, accompanied by the fine tall figure of the youthful maniac, leaning his head upon his hand, his arm supported by a part of the broken rock, whose appearance struck her with dismay.

She slightly pressed the door---it flew open, presenting her and attendant to the astonished group.

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**Chapter 35.**

---

What charms has sorrow in that face;  
Sorrow seems pleas'd to dwell, with so much  
sweetness;  
Yet now and then a melancholy smile  
Breaks out like lightning in a winter-night,  
And shews a moment's day.

DRYDEN.

---

**T**HE inmates of the monastery of  
Bunbury were disturbed at the dawn  
of day by loud and incessant knock-  
ings

ings at the great entrance of the chapel.

The Lady Abbess arose---De Peckforton rushed on her thoughts ---the monks applied to her for the keys, in the utmost confusion---she knew not how to proceed---the knocking was still louder---she hastened to the gate---a very short parley ensued---and she had just time to admit Eleanora, Octavian, Beatrice, and attendant, when it was assailed by the guards of De Peckforton.--- They retired on the Lady Abbess peremptorily refusing their demands.

The females trembled with suspense and fear; having, for a considerable



derable time, from the elevation of the monastery, beheld their enemies approaching.

Confusion and tumultuous inquietude possessed the minds of all present, when, after some pause, Beatrice became loud in her description of the events that had befallen her.

“To be sure they took me for  
“my Lady---so I struggled well at  
“first, but they cut my arm, and  
“then I was quite dead with fear  
“and loss of blood, and never knew  
“where I was than I got to the gate of  
“the chapel; and there, only think, I  
“saw Sir Hugh!---I screamed vio-  
“lently, I was so frightened, think-  
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“ing it was his ghost; but his anger  
“ soon convinced me he was alive,  
“ for he did so scold and rant when  
“ he found it was me; and I was so  
“ pleased to find he was alive, that  
“ he might not haunt me, and then  
“ so delighted he had not got you my  
“ Lady, for I knew he would not  
“ give a fig for me; for once do you  
“ know”---

“ How did you escape from him?”  
interrupted Agatha.

“ Oh, why they left me at that  
“ odious gate going to the wood  
“ where Robert was killed---Ah!  
“ poor Robert, I thought of him,  
“ and thought”---

“ Do

“ Do, Beatrice, inform us of the  
“ particulars of your escape; we  
“ can perfectly conceive your feel-  
“ ings upon this occasion :” observed  
the Lady Abbess.

“ Why I told you they left me at  
“ the wicket of the wood, and I  
“ determined to go to the castle and  
“ tell my fellow-servants all how my  
“ Lady had been used---so I met my  
“ Lady Eleanora’s lover, and told  
“ him all about it, and where I was  
“ going, when he was almost as cross  
“ as Sir Hugh, and made me go into  
“ a cave in the wood, and ordered  
“ me to remain there---but I’m sure  
“ I am born under a very unlucky

L 2

“ planet,

“planet, for I had not been left  
“there five minutes before a mad  
“youth and the fat friar of the mo-  
“nastery came in, and there was  
“such a work, and he called him  
“such horrible names, that I was  
“fearful every moment he would  
“have begun upon me, then Octa-  
“vian came in, and gaped at the  
“priest like a goose---and we had  
“such confusion---the next night  
“Lady Eleanora alarmed us again,  
“and she can tell the rest.”

“We left the youth and friar in  
“the cave,” added Eleanora, “Oc-  
“tavian being anxious to relieve  
“your apprehensions: thank Hea-  
“ven

“ven, we are safe at present; but  
“how long we can be enabled to  
“elude his implacable revenge,  
“Heaven only knows!”

A corresponding sigh breathed from each bosom, and a melancholy gloom, aided by the tears of persecuted innocence, influenced all present.

The calm serenity of the evening induced the Lady Abbess to lead her afflicted friends to the small hermitage in the garden; when seated, she addressed them in all the persuasive eloquence of piety---expatiated upon the power and wisdom of Providence, the goodness and mercy of the Supreme Being, and the certainty



tainty of the recompence of virtue and undissembled religion---she was interrupted---a faint voice of joy issued from amidst the woods.

The bells of the monastery commenced their musical peals, which re-echoed through the groves and drowned the voice of the decrepid monk, who hastily entered, and, with a tremulous accent, faintly articulated, "Earl Randolph's returned! " ---Our chief is victorious!"

Agatha sunk in the arms of the Lady Abbess; and Octavian appeared, confirming the report of the friar.

Joy beamed on the countenances of the surrounding females, Beatrice became

became intoxicated with its effects, and, in her volatile mood, seized the trembling hands of the aged friar and danced him about to the quick time of the "Cheshire Round."---This ludicrous appearance caught the attention of Agatha, and, amidst her tears, she smiled at its singularity.

The noisy rejoicing of the villagers resounded from every quarter.--- It happened to be the period of the year appropriated to mirth---it was their annual Wake---at which time Randolph was ever wont to bestow his smile and reward on the virtuous, and check, by mildness and persuasion, the errors of humanity.

---

**Chapter 36.**

---

I boast not half the age of this tall oak,  
Beneath whose boughs, in merry converse oft,  
My fires have pass'd their time in high succession;  
Each, in their turn, have proudly call'd it theirs;  
And yet e'en now, behold! erect it stands:  
And like its leaves, its lords have droop'd away.

B.

---

**T**HE Earl of Chester approached  
the lofty citadel, impressed with sen-  
sations, cheering yet afflicting---he  
cast his eyes, with a melancholy af-  
fection, on the seat of his ancestors---  
recalled

recalled to mind those actions of his  
valorous predecessors which rendered them deserving of public esteem, and the praises of future historians.

He paused, and the comforts and joy formerly experienced within its walls led him into a melancholy comparison---he shuddered at his daughter's fate, and languished for the chief ornament that once adorned it---rage influenced him, but religion ever checked its force---he sighed submission, and the tear glistened beneath his hoary eye-brows.

As he entered the lower ward of the castle, the tumultuous joy of his  
soldiery

soldiery saluted him, and he beheld, from the eminence, multitudes and scattered parties flocking from every habitation to greet their glorious chieftain's safe return.

The feelings of a brave man and a real patriot, untainted by the visionary ideas of licentious liberty, must be exquisite on an occasion of this nature.

His sense and discernment induced him to deem every excess of party injurious to the welfare of his country; nor did this contempt of prejudice lead him beyond or tend to eradicate the bounds of religion, order, and rational government.

No



No individual, be however so obscure his birth, passed unnoticed by the generous Earl; the weakness of age yielded to the power of affectionate gratitude, and the ardour of youth broke forth in enthusiastic admiration.

Ever anxious to anticipate their wishes in the promotion of innocent pleasure, he informed his knight of his intention of presiding at the Wake on the morrow, in the lower wards of the castle, according to the custom of his ancestors.

Instantly were the peasants at work in their preparations for the event, and every yeoman either on  
the

the eminence beneath the fortification of the castle, or on a neighbouring elevation, began to pitch his tent for the accomodation of his coming friends.

Octavian, in the evening, left the monastery, anxious to learn how De Peckforton conducted himself; when he was informed of the intention of the Earl.

He immediately returned, and after a consultation with the Lady Abbess, it was agreed that the whole party should attend at the castle in disguise on the morrow.

Agatha felt her heart lightened by the delightful expectation of seeing her

her parent; yet never for a moment did the memory of Rodolphus cease to command her affliction, or the fear of De Peckforton's malice check her hopes, even of contentment.

Early the ensuing morning Randolph made his appearance amidst his joyful subjects.

A canopy and chair of state was erected at the entrance of the higher ward of the castle, and the extensive plain below was well adapted for the rural sports of the villagers.

The bells proclaimed the seating of the Earl; and again the dark blue  
standard

standard waved from the highmost turret.

Agatha arose with the lark, and was soon joined by her anxious friends---A pure white robe invested her lovely limbs, truly emblematic of the purity it enclosed; her auburn locks waved round her graceful shoulders, and a lovely suffusion spread over one of the most beautiful interesting countenances in the creation.

The Lady Abbess viewed her with delight, and gave to Beatrice a coarse pilgrim's frock of grey camlet to disguise her mistress.---In similar

lar garbs the whole party, attended by Octavian, proceeded through the gate of the Abbey, directing their course towards the majestic rock.

The village was deserted, not a human being was to be seen.---From the plain of Bunbury they beheld the side of the castle covered with multitudes---Agatha's heart beat, whilst her friends were in enthusiastic admiration at the singularity of the scene.

The Lady Abbess proceeded first between Octavian and Eleanora; Agatha was supported by her mutual friends Ladies Emma and Isabella, followed



followed by Beatrice, whose delight, at the expectation of being restored to the castle, was only checked by a fear of De Peckforton.

Agatha felt herself depressed---a prophetic boding of some dismal event harrassed her mind; the nature of her errand caused a paternal joy in her heart, and she scarcely knew where she was when she arrived at the ascent to the castle.

The clamorous mirth nearly overcame her---she was led by her trembling friends to the circle, which was extended a great space before the throne of the Earl.

The

The Lady Abbess intreated her to support herself like the daughter of Earl Randolph.

Her resolution seemed recruited by the suggestion; she gently raised the cowl from her face, and beheld her parent:---But, great God! what was her horror, when she also beheld the person of De Peckforton stalk from amidst the motley group, and place himself beside the chair of Randolph?

His dark eye rolled around the encircling multitude; conscious of his search, the whole party shrunk with horror---the sports had commenced, and an huge hawk was

launched in the air to be shot by three emulative sportsmen.

The Lady Abbess discovered one of them to be the deranged peasant; the eyes of the people were directed towards the archers: but the fears of Agatha and her friends rendered theirs immoveable from De Peckforton; who at length discovered them, and started beside the Earl--- he again viewed the croud around him---retired to the back of the chair of Randolph---drawing his cloak around his chest, he displayed to the trembling females, a polished poignard, which he suspended over the venerable head of Randolph!

Agatha

Agatha shrieked, and flew towards the throne---the whistling of a dart passed her from the cross bow of the peasant, and she beheld De Peckforton fall at the feet of Randolph!

The youth flew to support her---the Earl arose---“Treason!” and “Murder!” resounded from every tongue---the garrison became under arms---the drums beat---and an universal confusion prevailed.

The dart quivered in the breast of De Peckforton, and his ambitious soul departed with a groan---the sword of the Earl shone in his hand, and he stood with astonishment, pity,

and alarm over the lifeless body of De Peckforton!

The fascinating calls, "My father! "My royal fire!" proceeding from the lips of his darling daughter, struck his ear---starting, he directed his eyes towards the spot, and beheld her in the arms of the peasant who had shot De Peckforton---he tottered towards them.

"Unhand her, wretch!" he first, trembling, spoke in wrath; when, casting a melancholy look, "in pity spare my long lost lamb!"

Agatha embraced him---"My father!"

"My



"My Agatha!"

"Hear it, great Heaven!" exclaimed the peasant, "and let recording angels proclaim this truth, "RODOLPHUS LIVES TO SEE ALL "HUMAN BLISS!" and he fell senseless at their feet.

No powers of description can be adequate to this scene---mental conception only is capable of doing justice to such a concurrence of interesting incidents. Astonishment and exquisite joy equally impressed the parties concerned, and from the spectators, for a length of time, no sounds were heard, but stifled sighs in the oppressed

oppressed bosoms of the delighted group.

The Earl faintly requested Octavian to raise his friend---Agatha reclined on the bosom of the good Lady Abbess, supported by Emma and Isabella---the afflicted Eleanora wept over the remains of her unfortunate brother, comforted by Octavian, who, on the application of the Earl, instantly raised Rodolphus.

As one awoke from a dream, he surveyed the surrounding objects---an impressive melancholy then possessed him, and he sunk on the shoulder of his friend.

The voice of Randolph called  
Agatha.

Agatha to a sense of her safety and happiness---she kissed his hand which retained her's---the figure of Rodolphus, and a partial recollection of what had passed, came across her mind, she flew towards him.

“ My Rodolphus, too!”

He raised himself from Octavian, who supported Agatha.

“ Sweet sufferer, it is! and yet,

“ 'tis not!”

He wept and embraced her---his words struck her with horror; she recollected the derangement of the peasant when Octavian addressed the Earl.

“ My liege, with your permission,

“ Rodolphus.

“Rodolphus will retire; his mind,  
“long harrassed with affliction’s  
“power, is now too sensitive for  
“joy like this.”

The Earl perceived the allusion conveyed in the words of Octavian; the Lady Abbess persuaded Eleonora to quit the corpse of De Peckforton.

Randolph then arose, and took the hand of his daughter---Rodolphus entreated that he might not be parted from Agatha---Octavian would have interfered, but the eyes of the fair one seemed to express a similar wish; when Rodolphus rapturously clasped the other hand, and the whole

whole party proceeded through the gate-way of the higher wards of the castle, amidst the respectful, sincere, and affectionate congratulations of numbers; who had that caution for the welfare of their chief and friends, as to remove the scene of festivity, and enjoy, in rapturous contemplation, the prospect of restored happiness to those whose virtue intitled them to the love and adoration of mankind.



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## Chapter 37.

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Ambition's like a circle on the water,  
Which never ceases to enlarge itself,  
Till by broad spreading it disperse to nought.

SHAKSPEARE.

---

DE Peckforton's depravity, proved, as it ever should, a source of continued unhappiness and misery, eventually fatal.

His ambition led him to espouse Agatha, as the daughter of the Earl of Chester---Rodolphus was the bar  
to

to that union, and he resolved to remove him; for which purpose, he, in disguise, joined a reinforcement destined to the Holy Land, where Rodolphus served.

His impatience to attain his ends thwarted them; a faithful servant, belonging to Rodolphus, discovered De Peckforton, insinuated himself in his favour, gained from him his intentions, and, unknown to Rodolphus, resolved to protect his master, and punish his intended murderer, at the risk of his own life.

De Peckforton knew not the person of Rodolphus, who was employed in a foreign service during the period

riod Rodolphus visited the castle; therefore the servant deceived him, by describing his own dress in the field of battle for his master's.--- They met in an engagement which took place the ensuing morning; the faithful attendant fell, and De Peckforton imagined Rodolphus no more.

Rodolphus afterwards heard a relation of these facts, communicated by his dying servant to a soldier near him on the field of battle.---He fought for Sir Hugh in vain---a ship sailed with an account of a decisive victory the instant it was concluded, and De Peckforton escaped.

The dread of the consequences of

Sir

Sir Hugh's return, and the impossibility of pursuit, rendered the lover miserable.---The pure fountain of reciprocal friendship, flowed in the bosoms of Rodolphus and Octavian ---the first vessel brought them to England, and they arrived soon after the captivity of Agatha.

Violence of rage and affliction injured the mental faculties of Rodolphus, and he owed to friendship the preservation of his existence.

Octavian's influence over him was unbounded---not a word of caution, marked by affection, but what regulated him in his most flighty moments;

ments; which was strongly proved in his absence from the castle, and his refraining to attack De Peckforton: to him he attributed the death of Agatha, whom Octavian informed him was murdered by unknown ruffians in the wood.

Octavian, son of Richard de Wilbraham, devoted his life to love and friendship---all search from his relatives were vain---his duty and affection induced him to take means of informing them of his welfare and safety, and intention of returning when his wishes were fulfilled in the rescue of his mistress and the preservation



vation of his friend---his ardent generous soul now beheld the consummation of his wishes.

The mind of Rodolphus bore returning happiness with more philosophy than misfortune---the power of all-subduing love, in possession of its object, regulated his passions---the Great Disposer of events called forth repentance, and claimed his gratitude---he looked forward with delight, and reposed in the bosom of his Agatha each sentiment of his soul.

The Earl, in the midst of joy as in the midst of sorrow, never forgot the

the source from whence all things rise.---The ensuing day he appointed a solemn thanksgiving for the restoration of his daughter; and, accompanied by every inmate of the castle, they humbly proceeded on foot to the Monastery of Bunbury.---How gratifying to every individual mind, how exemplary to his subjects, and, how just a tribute to the mercies of Providence, was this act of Randolph's!--He ever esteemed himself as the possessor of grandeur under the will of a superior; not arrogating personal greatness from the elevation of his rank, but fulfilling the

the numerous duties which his situation demanded, to the best of his power and wisdom.

Rodolphus, on their return, solicited forgiveness for the monk--the Earl expatiated upon the heinousness of the crimes of men in the service of Heaven, and ordered him to be banished, as an example to his brotherhood, "humbly trusting," according to the words of his banishment, "that solitude might call forth repentance to atone for crimes committed against God."

De Peckforton's hypocrisy and treachery demanded Randolph's abhorrence and contempt.--He sighed

with a conviction of the insignificance of the wisdom of man, even aided by a lengthened experience.

Beatrice assumed, if possible, more importance in her sphere than ever; and so often had she told the tale of her capture over, that those additions, which her invention had at first supplied, now, even in her own mind, bore the aspect of reality.

Hubert fled, and the Earl ordered the castle of De Peckforton to be razed to the ground, and not a vestige to remain, amply repaying Octavian and Eleanora with considerable possessions elsewhere.

The day of nuptials arrived, and the

the venerable priest of Cumbermere attended for the purpose, at the express appointment of the Earl.

The silence of this happy morn, was broke by the merry peal from the monastery; the eyelid closed from that moment carried shame beneath it---and all hearts and arms were alert in their different avocations.

Four magnificent open chariots formed the procession; Sir Robert le Grosvenor and Emma ascended the first; Sir Philip de Egerton and Isabella next called the attention of the happy populace; Rodolphus



led forth the beauteous Agatha, and the air resounded with shouts of joy.

Scarce had its murmurs subsided, when the Earl and the Lady Abbess appeared. The veneration and love which his presence ever commanded, now became stronger from the contrast of his former misfortunes.

A procession graced with such dignity, honour, respectability, and delight, seldom figured in the page of history.

The Earl blessed each knight with the hands of their fair ones, and his generous affectionate kindness to  
Eleanora

Eleanora claimed the admiration of all present.

Cheshire poured her chief of men into the wards of the castle---tournaments were appointed, and warlike, robust games instituted---our hardy ancestors possessed valour, vigour, and generosity, and he was best rewarded who deserved it most.

Content, the nourisher of the human mind, imparted its genial power universally: paternal joy; pure, undefiled love; generous, noble friendship, lent their assistant aid, and the stern aspect of the venerable Earl was marked by corresponding sympathy.

Rodolphus

Rodolphus and Agatha anticipated each wish of his heart; the evening of his life passed with the serenity of the morning; and, at an advanced period, he departed, an example of piety, wisdom, and virtue to succeeding ages.

FINIS.

